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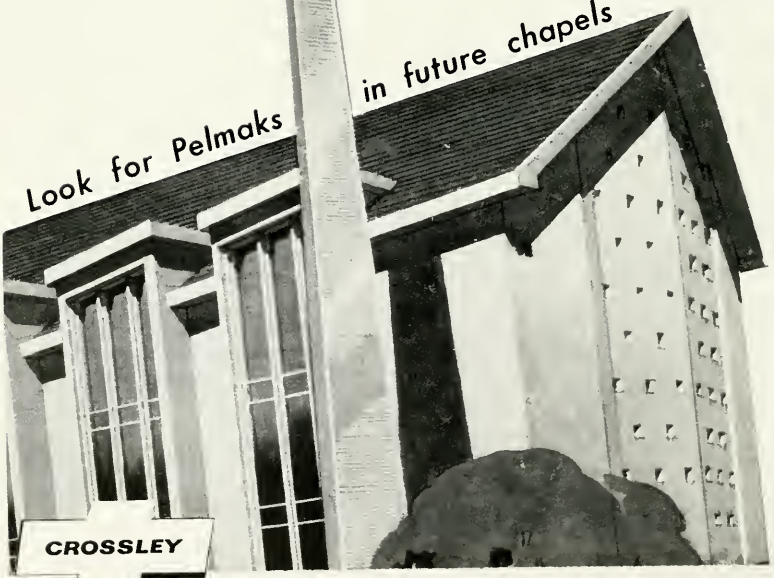

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Millennial STAR

DECEMBER 1963

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A DAY OF RE-DEDICATION

THE world is drifting away from the Christ. Fewer and fewer people attend church services, more and more make the Sabbath a holiday, and the true ideals of Christianity are nearly forgotten by millions of professing Christians.

And yet Christmas is widely celebrated. Why, under the circumstances ? For what purpose ?

Holidays are dear to the hearts of most people. Holidays are play days, times for fun and relaxation, for light-heartedness and freedom from restraint. Whether it is a Bank holiday or a religious one, it is a day off, a time for frolic and fun in the eyes of most people.

And Christmas has largely become that. And what a pity. How far removed is frolic and fun from the true meaning of Christmas !

Surely we can never banish Christ from Christmas. We do not speak of the exchanging of gifts, even though gifts were brought to the Christ child.

We speak of Christ the Redeemer and what He means. We speak of the Saviour who died for us, who gave us life and resurrection, and who offers us life eternal through obedience to His gospel. He is the Christ of Christmas, and without Him there is no Christmas.

Latter-day Saints must declare the Christ to all the world. They represent Him in this world. As His Saints then, let us bring His Spirit into our celebration of Christmas. Let us be thankful for Him and His sacrifice for us, and make Christmas a day of re-dedication to His way of life.

CONTENTS

Greetings fram the First Presidency 342

ARTICLES

But this Tamb is EMPTY, by Dr. Adam S. Bennion 344
Sa different a day, by Richard L. Evans 346
A Cheery, Sabering Seasan, by Marian D. Hanks 348
Christ's Eternal Fight for our Free Agency, by President Hugh B. Brawn 352
In the Path that JESUS TROD, by Marion G. Ramney 358
Pianeer Christmas|Marman Battalion, by Levi Edgar Young 355
You connat gift-wrap the wonder of Christmas, by Joy Bucherite 360
We thank Thee O Gad for a Prophet, by President N. Eldon Tanner 350

FEATURES

Abaut Music—Caraling dates back ta A.D. 129 350
Relief Society—Wamen are essential to God's plan 362
Sunday Schaal—The 2½-minute Testimony 364
MIA—Are you fit ta be a Marman ? 365
Primary—Distance Trouble ? Hald a Hame Primary 366
Bible Stories for Children, by Emma Morr Petersen 368
Knaw the Baok and Lesson of Life 370
Melchizedek Priesthaod 372
Aaronic Priesthaod 372
News from Stakes and Missions 378
Elder Bensan appointed Eurapeon President 380

FRONT COVER : " The Nativity " painted specially for the Millennial Star *by Elder Jerry Harston, of the British Mission.*

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THOUGHTS FOR YOUR TALKS

SHARING

" Christ prayed to the Father for his disciples to be one even as He and His Father are one. This quality of sharing, so characteristic of the Saviour's life, offers to us, if faithful and worthy, every blessing which He has received from His Father."—Elder Delbert L. Stapley, Council of the Twelve.

FREE AGENCY

" By His supreme knowledge of the nature of man both individually and collectively the Lord sees the future of men and of nations, but even so the agency of man is not nuullified."—Elder Elray L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

HOME INFLUENCE

" I believe there is no force so vital in helping to shape the lives of the young, for good or ill, as the influence of parents and home." — President Marion D. Hanks, First Council of the Seventy.

BOOK OF MORMON

" The authenticity of the " Book of Mormon " rests upon two facts, acceptance of which tantamount to acceptance to the whole of the restored Gospel, namely : The fact of modern revelation by which I mean direct communication from God to men and the fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God."—Elder Marion G. Romney, Council of the Twelve.

DECEMBER

1

GREETINGS FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

The Babe of Bethlehem is still our Lord and Master

AT this Christmas time we extend greetings to all men everywhere. In the spirit of Christian brotherhood we invite the attention of mankind the world over to the true spirit of Christmas.

As another year rolls around, the accomplishment of men, the advancement of learning astonish us. We believe there is no limit to man's progress. The mind, the intellect of man has no bounds. The psalmist of old wrote :

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Psalms 8:6).

Likely in no previous year has more knowledge and understanding been disclosed by the work of man. Not alone in matters pertaining to space, but in literally innumerable other field of human endeavour.

We take stock of our year's accomplishments at Christmas time. This action is almost involuntary in the lives of true Christians. Predicated thereon, we in large measure envision our work for the ensuing year.

In April of 1844 the Prophet Joseph Smith contended *"that it is the first principle of the Gospel to know for certainty the character of God and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another. Power to do so is inseparably associated with the true gospel of Christ. To enjoy the full blessings of the gospel, one must follow the established order of the Kingdom of God and come unto the spirits of just men made perfect and unto an innumerable company of angels, unto God the Father of all and to Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant."*

We appeal to all Christendom to pray for greater light and knowledge that we might better know Him to whom we all pay homage as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth.

Love expressed in joyous laughter . . . the First Presidency of the Church. Left to right, President Hugh B. Brown, 1st Counsellor; President David O. McKay; and President N. Eldon Tanner, 2nd Counsellor.

We call upon all our Father's children throughout the world to remember upon this day of days that the Saviour can best be worshipped by our following in His footsteps.

When Satan tempted Christ after His forty days of fasting by challenging him to command "that these stones be turned into bread," the Son of God answered and said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone."

Great as our world accomplishments are, we are still capable of rising to far greater heights by also living "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man cannot stand alone. What a solemn witness the world bears this Christmas of a need for a power greater than ours to bring order out of chaos and replace hatred with love in the hearts of men.

At Christmastime we concentrate as at no other time of the year to give "glory to God on high" and pray for "peace on earth, good will to men."

We are happy to live to experience another anniversary of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and once again to unite with all good people to pray God that His will may be done on earth even as it is in Heaven.

May our knowledge of God and His ways more than keep pace with our temporal intellectual growth. Let us remember that the keeping of the commandments of God can lead us into the light of a brighter day. We greet you this wonderful Holiday Season with the admonition of Him whom we worship:

"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16:24-27)

We bear witness that the Lord Jesus Christ lives, that the babe born in Bethlehem is still our Lord and Master and the God of this world, and the cornerstone upon which the Church is founded. We testify that He reveals His will to mankind. We invite all men to join with us in recognising His atoning sacrifice and doing homage to Him by lending obedience to His laws, that we may insure for ourselves, as we render glory to God on high and strive to bring Peace on Earth and Goodwill to all men.

But this TOMB is EMPTY

BY DR. ADAM S. BENNION, WHO UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1958, WAS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF TWELVE

ALL my life I had dreamed dreams of setting foot on the soil of Palestine, of walking where He had walked.

The Holy Land is well named. There's an indescribable prophetic atmosphere wherever you go. Somehow you seem to hear the call of Abraham. In fancy, you see Moses at Sinai. You love to walk in such fields as the one in which Ruth may have gleaned.

The recollections of your boyish imagination stirs again as you drive near the duelling ground of David and Goliath. How you wish you might see Mary and Martha and Lazarus as you walk by the houses in Bethany.

But most of all you thrill to thoughts of Jesus. You can't wait to drive down to Bethlehem. What you see and ponder there inevitably urges you on to Calvary. You hurry off on a morning to sit down by an ancient Olive Tree in Gethsemane, you pause there again at noon, and then come back to linger at eventide in meditations stirred at no other place in the world.

You conjure up thoughts of the impending crucifixion, but more especially are you conscious of "His sweat was as if it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" as He contemplated taking upon Himself the sins of the world.

A fascinating sense of endearment attaches to the names in this far away country: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Galilee, Jericho, Bethsaida, Cana, Capernaum, Jerusalem, Bethany, Gethsemane.

You like to think of the shepherds, "Abiding in field" and all unconsciously you search the sky for one particular star.

You wish it were possible to join a "multitude of the Heavenly Host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."

You stand for an hour in the "stable" at Bethlehem watching saintly souls kneel to kiss the spot marked as His birthplace, and you marvel that from such lowly beginning could come "The King of kings and Lord of lords."

But to me the birth never stands alone. Jesus was not born to an episode, He was born to a Mission—He was to redeem mankind.

Dr. Adam S. Bennion

I shall always be grateful to my Arab guide for his suggestion that we save for the closing scene of our tour of Jerusalem, the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa. As we approached it the guide suggested, "There are famous tombs all over the world, but this one is different—*this tomb is empty.*"

Then there flashed through my mind the scripture, "He is not here, but is risen."

In that line lies the great hope of humanity, the reality of the resurrection. We glory in the Risen Lord, and yet do we really thrill to the thought of the Living Christ or do we follow our symbols back to the Cross?

It was while I was meditating upon such thoughts that a most stimulating volume *America the Unknown,* by Guido Piorene, fell into my hands. Let me quote one sentence from this book:

"Throughout my entire book I have tried to show that the American Christ is a Christ off the cross—born—it seems —of his triumph over suffering and death; a Christ whose passion is left in the shadows and whose resurrection is placed in the light. A Christ who is both a worker of miracles and a redeemer."

What are our thoughts out beyond the resurrection? Are we sceptical with Thomas? Or with Peter do we know "Thou hast the words of eternal life?"

For a brief moment let us centre our thoughts on these declarations:

1, *Jesus, Himself, proclaimed that He would go on living. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up—But He spake of the temple of His body"* (John 2:19-21.)

"But after I am risen, I will go be-

fore you into Galilee" (Matt. 26:32.)

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Rev. 1:18.)

2, His apostles, disheartened at His death, were inclined to "go a fishing" until "they saw Him alive" and then they consecrated themselves to His service, even unto death.

3, Jesus, after His resurrection, visited the American continent and ministered to the ancient inhabitants of this land.

You will recall that He had said in Jerusalem *"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."* (John 10:16.)

TALENTS

"Every man and woman who has talent and hides it will be called a slothful servant. Improve day by day on the capital you have. In proportion as we are capacitated to receive so it is our duty to do."

Brigham Young

It is intriguing to read in modern scripture the fulfilment of that promise. *"And verily I say unto you that ye are they of whom I said, Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."* (3 Nephi 15:21.)

4, The Prophet Joseph Smith, to whom both God the Father and the Son appeared in modern day revelation, has born this stirring witness to the Living Christ, a witness for which he gave his life:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of Him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give Him: That He lives!

"For we saw Him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that He is the Only Begotten of the Father" (D. & C. 76:22-23.)

5, And finally, at this Christmas season, it is inspiring to ponder the prophetic assurances that Jesus is still to come to earth once more, this time in power and glory, to gather in His faithful followers, to rule and reign over them in peace and love for ever.

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25.)

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory" (Matt. 25:31.)

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then, we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Surely it is wonderful to realise the dynamic significance of the declaration, "This tomb is empty."

And so, this Christmas, as we hang up the children's stockings that Santa may fill them with toys and nuts and sweets, let us in fancy hang up our own stockings of Faith, that Jesus may fill them with the heart-warming assurance:

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11:25-26.)

In the spirit of that glorious sentiment, may this be a wonderful Christmas to all of you.

DECEMBER

2

CHRISTMAS DAYBREAK

BEFORE the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cockcrow,
Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made,
Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together,
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Shepherd of the fold.
Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With saint and angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory.

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI

So different a day. . . .

BY RICHARD L. EVANS
OF THE COUNCIL OF TWELVE

THERE is a question concerning Christmas that keeps recurring: What is it that makes it so different a day? Except for some very real and far-reaching considerations it wouldn't be so different a day—and if it weren't we should be going through some meaningless motions.

Christmas has it own special spirit, quite apart from all other commemorative occasions. It IS different, and there are reasons why it is and should be so. It is the day on which we have come to commemorate the birth of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour and our Lord, the Prince of Peace. And as concerning this, we might well consider some searching questions.

Is it just tradition? Is it just a story—or was it real? Was he born in Bethlehem of a virgin, the only Begotten of the Father in the Flesh? Was there a star? Were there wise men and shepherds? Were there angels who sang? Was he what the scriptures say he was, or was he something less than the scriptures say he was?

Did he live and perform miracles and preach an immortal message? Did he heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing and confound the worldly wise? Was it so—or was it something men simply said was so?

Was he crucified and entombed, and did he rise again the third day and appear unto his Apostles and unto others also? Did they see and touch him as was testified by Thomas.

Was he literally resurrected? Did he break the bonds of death? Did he ascend unto heaven and take his place at the right hand of the Father? Is he our Saviour and Redeemer—and will he come again? Is it all true or was it just a story—something that someone said was so?

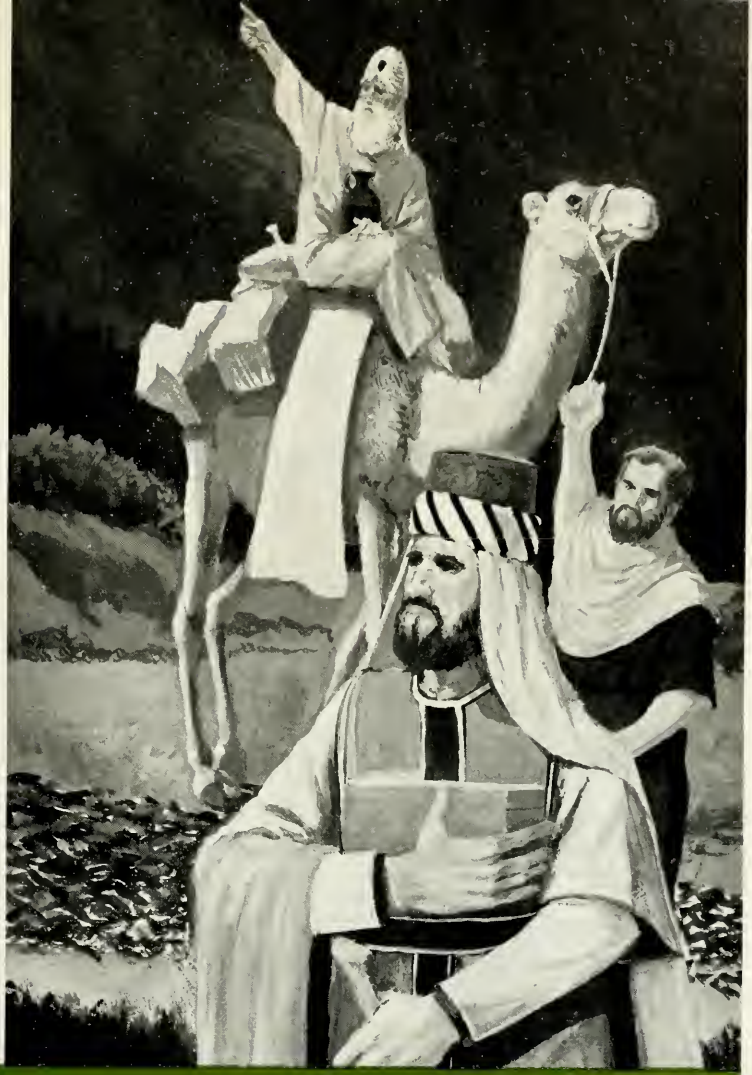
These are questions that call for unequivocal answers, for the meaning of Christmas depends upon them. And we would witness here that the answer to each and all of them is a fervent, unequivocal, unqualified—"Yes." We may not altogether understand how or why, but we would witness that He who made us in His own image, who is our loving Father, did send to earth His only begotten Son.

Were there wise men, and shepherds and singing by the heavenly host? Was there a star? Would we be unwilling to believe that He who gave us life and who keeps creation and uncounted billions of stars in their course could place a special symbol in the sky for the birth of His beloved Son.

Even though we cannot fully understand the ultimate answers, these things we accept as we accept the fact that we are, that we live, that life is real, and that He has glorious plans and purposes for all of us that extend endlessly beyond what men now know. All this is part of the real meaning and message of Christmas, and part of what makes it so different a day.

DECEMBER 3

GREETINGS TO ALL THE BRITISH SAINTS . . .



"The Wise Men" painted by Elder Jerry Harston of the British Mission.

"I am the light of the world," He said. Then he brought light to a man who was blind. The Pharisees were affronted with this and reviled Him, saying they knew not from whence He came. From the man who had been made to see came this answer: "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."

From all of the missionaries of Britain to the Saints who worship here, our love and Christmas greetings, in the name of Him who hath opened our eyes.

DECEMBER

4

A Cheery, Sobering Season

BY ELDER MARION D. HANKS
OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF SEVENTY

President Marion D. Hanks

EVEN among the sorrowing, troubled multitude of suffering people, the man seemed an especially pathetic figure. For thirty-eight years he had suffered his infirmity. He was helpless, unable to do anything for himself, totally dependent upon others for the smallest service.

Perhaps he felt especially forlorn this day. "*There was a feast of the Jews.*" a happy time for many. He and the other troubled people—"*impotent folk, blind, halt, withered*"—were waiting in the porches of the pool of Bethesda, hoping that they might be first into the pool after "*the troubling of the water*" in order that their afflictions might be healed. But there was no one to help him; another always claimed the blessing. He hoped against hope that somehow, some time, he might be made well.

Jesus came to Jerusalem from Galilee where he had appointed the Twelve and spoken to the people on the Mount. He saw the man lying by the pool, unattended, and said to him, "*Wilt thou be made whole*?" The impotent man explained that there was no man to lift him. "*Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.*"

The impotent man was powerless no more. He was made whole. He walked, he carried his bed, he rejoiced and told others what had happened to him. He was "*made whole*"!

The Master of Christmas has yet the power to make men whole. As He healed sick bodies and minds, so through Him were the sin-sick souls of men made well. He still has that power; He still makes men whole.

This joyous season emphasises the truth, but the power is with His people always; through it we can rise, and lift others. He bids us to leave our sins and selfishness, take up our burdens, and move in a better direction. He helps us; He shares the heaviness of our load, of our hearts.

The season when His birth is celebrated reminds us of our relationship to Him and to all other men. The sweet, moving magic of Christmas is the spirit of the Saviour bidding us to rise, and to love and fellowship our brother and help him rise.

But there is a sobering sequel to the story of the man who was made whole. "*Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*"

What could be worse than thirty-eight years of impotency? Have you thought? Have you tried to imagine?

Could it be the loss of the capacity to respond to Him when He bids us **"Rise and be made whole"?**

Christmas is a happy, cheery, joyful, glowing, significant season, encouraging faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord, and appreciation that through responding to His invitation we can become, and remain, whole.

DECEMBER

5

CHRISTMAS BELLS

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world received from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth,
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth He sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

DECEMBER

6

ABOUT MUSIC

Caroling dates back to AD 129

BY EMMA MARR PETERSEN

REVELATION given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, December 6, 1832. Exposition of the Lord's parable concerning the wheat and the tares—its application to the latter days.

1. Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servants, concerning the parahle of the wheat and of the tares:

2. Behold, verily I say, the field was the world, and the apostles were the sowers of the seed;

3. And after they have fallen asleep the great persecutor of the church, the apostate, the whore, even Babylon, that maketh all nations to drink of her cup, in whose hearts the enemy, even Satan, sitteth to reign—behold he soweth the tares; wherefore, the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness.

4. But hehold, in the last days, even now while the Lord is heginning to hring forth the word, and the hlade is springing up and is yet tender—

5. Behold, verily, I say unto you, the angels are crying unto the Lord day and night, who are ready and waiting to be sent forth to reap down the fields;

6. But the Lord saith unto them, pluck not up the tares while the hlade is yet tender (for verily your faith is weak), lest you destroy the wheat also.

7. Therefore, let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in hundles, and the field remaineth to he hurned.

8. Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers —

9. For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have heen hid from the world with Christ in God —

10. Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken hy the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world hegan.

11. Therefore, hlessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and through this priesthood, a saviour unto my people Israel. The Lord hath said it. Amen.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS SECTION 86

ONE of the oldest and most heart-warming customs in general use today is that of carols at Christmas-time.

From earliest history of existing churches, festivals celebrating the birth of Christ were held in many places. Such festivals were known in England as "Christes Messa", or "Christ's Mass". This developed into the word "Christmas". Sometimes this word is represented as Xmas, because X is the Greek equivalent of Ch. and Ch. represents Christ.

Many years ago a young priest named Joseph Mohr was walking home one beautiful winter night through the sparkling snow after having visited a lovely young mother who had just given birth to a baby boy. His thoughts turned to the Virgin Mary and the Christ-child, and he wished that he might write a hymn about them. He was awed by the majestic stillness and brightness of the night, and decided that the song should be simple, beautiful, reverent. At his desk when he arrived home he swiftly wrote the words "Silent night, holy night; All is calm. All is bright".

But a song without a melody is but half a song, and he knew little about music. The church organist Franz Gruber was a musician. Perhaps he would help. So Joseph Mohr hurried rapidly to the home of Herr Gruber and showed him the verses. Gruber immediately caught the spirit of the Christmas song, and the melody with simple harmony was completed in less than an hour.

At the first performance of "Silent night" the organ which was to furnish accompaniment was out of order and could not be used, so it was sung in two parts, melody and bass, with guitar accompaniment. Herr Gruber sang bass and played the instrument while Fr. Mohr and a local choir member sang the melody.

When it was first heard Gruber's wife exclaimed "We shall die, but this song will live". Frau Gruber's prophecy was fulfilled when a visiting organist heard it, copied and taught it to four gifted children who sang it in the neighbouring provinces, and later at the Leipzig Fair, before the King and Queen of Saxony, and on many other occasions. It was taken to France, England, Russia, and America, and although Gruber died in poverty and obscurity, the melodious song he and Fr. Mohr composed had become immortal.

The custom of caroling dates to the year A.D. 129 when a Roman bishop called Telesphorus gathered a group at Christmas time to sing in honour of Christ's birth.

Basically traditional caroling has not changed. Down through the centuries it has always been a melodic expression of faith and hope, and has been based on the story of the nativity as told in Liuke 2: 1-14.

The exact origin of the word "Carol" is unclear, but some scholars believe it to be derived from the Latin word "Carolare", meaning "to sing". Others say that it is a Greek word meaning "flute-player", and originally referred to the musicians who accompanied the chorales on flutes. The early carols were sung in Latin and were greatly popularised by St. Francis of Assissi who encouraged "jovial singing" at this season of the year.

By the fifteenth century Christmas carols had become more melodic and more easily sung, the words being simpler and more easily remembered.

Occasionally folk songs and pagan rites and other secular influences were combined with the religious flavour of the original carols. "Deck the halls with boughs of holly" illustrates this type, the melody of which originated in Wales, and was once adapted by Mozart for violin and piano.

"God rest you merry, gentlemen" was also sung by Cornishmen and also in medieval times by strolling musicians. Martin Luther who was a great lover of music, did much to advance the custom of caroling, and was thought to be the author of "Away in a manger".

Carols were outlawed in the time of Oliver Cromwell and remained so during much of the seventeenth century. For two hundred years in England the custom declined during which period Charles Dickins wrote the poignant story of "A Christmas Carol". He himself never heard a carol sung.

Even though forbidden by law the custom was carried on in many families, and composers continued to write more carols.

In the year 1719 George F. Handel furnished a musical setting for the words of Isaac Watts' "Joy to the world," which was based on the ninety-eighth psalm. And in the same era of religious formalism (1730) John Wesley wrote "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing", as well as a great many other carols and hymns. These words were introduced into a cantata by Mendelssohn, and this is the arrangement most commonly used in our day.

Two of our loveliest carols are of European origin "Angels we have heard on high", set to an old French melody, and "Lo, how a rose e'er blooming", which is a German 15th century poem set to an anonymous 16th century melody, and harmonised by Michael Pretorius.

May this lovely custom never dwindle or die down.

EDITOR'S NOTE
The words of one of the oldest known English carols, "A Babe Ys Borne I Wys", are printed on Pages 368 and 369.

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DECEMBER

7

STRONG SON OF GOD

STRONG Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

BY ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Christ's Eternal fight for our Free Agency

BY PRESIDENT HUGH B. BROWN
OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

ON Biblical authority the Church of Jesus Christ affirm that a Divine plan for man's salvation was formulated by God the Father before the foundations of the earth were laid when all the sons of God shouted for joy at the prospect of mortality. (Job 38 : 7).

At a time far antedating Eden, the spirits of all men had a primeval existence and were intelligences with spirit bodies of which God was universal Father. In the Bible we read, "*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*" (Eccles. 12 : 7).

The Lord told Jeremiah that He knew him before his body was formed and sanctified him and ordained him a prophet unto the nations. (Jeremiah 1 : 4). And the Apostle Paul testified :

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits, and live ?

—Hebrews 12 : 9

During this antemortal existence in a council in the heavens with God the Father on the throne, there was one who challenged God desiring to usurp His power and force all men to do his bidding. He coveted Godhood and said to the Father, "Give me thy glory." He would have had a dictatorship in Heaven ruled by tyrants with all spirit children bondsmen.

Chief among that vast assembly was Jehovah, the same who would become the Christ Child, the Redeemer. He was the First-born among the spirits, and by birthright was both heir and leader. He opposed the plot to rob men of their freedom and espoused the counter proposition with free agency as the watchword.

All who favoured the Messiah would be given mortal bodies with the seeds of death implanted in them. They would have right to choose their course in life and accept responsibility for their conduct. Their bodies would return to the dust from which they came. Through the voluntary atonement of Christ, a member of the Godhead, resurrection from the dead was guaranteed to all. Another blessing of mortality would be the Godlike power of procreation.

Against this plan the proud, defiant Lucifer led a great rebellion, and one-third of all the spirits followed him. John tells us in the book of Revelations :

. . . there was a war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought his angels.

And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

—Revelations 12 : 7-9

The Prophet Isaiah knew of this when he wrote :

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning ! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations !

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north :

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High.

—Isaiah 14 : 12-14

Adam, because of disobedience, was evicted from the Garden of Eden; the door was closed behind him and his posterity, and the tree of life was guarded by a flaming sword as we read in Genesis. (Genesis 3 : 24). Mortal birth erases recollection of that spiritual pre-existence and the memory of premortal life is as a feeble echo, and yet, as we sometimes sing, a secret something whispers you're a stranger here, and we feel that we have wandered from a more exalted sphere.

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And Thou hast made him ; thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

President Hugh B. Brown

The fate of all seemed hopeless when sin and death joined hands to shut them out for ever, and Satan leered in triumph at what seemed to be Christ's failure. Men had no power to conquer death and without Divine assistance would sleep for ever in their graves.

The atonement was foreshadowed when Adam offered sacrifice, and each prophet who succeeded him was told about Christ's mission. The scene of battle shifted, but the war between good and evil still continues among the sons of men.

Christ had power to conquer death by Himself becoming mortal. He would reach across the valley and build a straight and narrow highway by which men could pass from death to life, and He said, "I am the way and the life." He built a bridge, one end of which was anchored in mortality and the other fixed in heaven. ". . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He said. (John 14 : 6).

So Christ was born in Bethlehem and entered the world of mortal men which Beelzebub had thought belonged to him alone. The battle lines were drawn again with the Messiah and the loyal sons of God on one side and Lucifer and his cohorts on the other.

At the moment of Christ's birth, Satan plotted His destruction and tried by force to thwart His Divine mission. But the rule of force, so far as His Son was concerned, had been vetoed by the Father. The devil has always had willing tools on earth and at this time Herod was his agent. He was cruel and wily like his master ; he sought to kill the Christ Child and in his slaughter of the infants he set a new low mark for even Satan.

But this Babe of mortal mother was also the Son of God the Father and could not be defeated by mortal men or devils. Satan, failing in his vile attempt, cunningly decided to bide his time until the Child had grown to manhood, and then he hoped to win by artifice where force had failed him.

But here again Satan blundered in thinking Christ was only mortal. He thought his own power would more than equal that of his young opponent.

After forty days of fasting, Jesus met this wily tempter who suggested that He satisfy His hunger by making bread of stones and thus manifest His power. He tried to sow seeds of pride and arrogance, two vices of his own. But Christ disclaimed dependence upon bread alone. He lived by every word proceeding from the mouth of God.

Having failed to make appetite and pride a strong ambition, Lucifer thought appetite for power would be appealing—love of power, the very rock on which he himself foundered. But Christ disdained this offer too and refused to flaunt His power. The third and last attempt to lure Him was to offer worldly wealth in exchange for His allegiance. And Satan heard the final words :

" . . . *Get thee behind me Satan* . . . " Luke 4 : 8.

Satan found his next ally among those who followed Jesus, Judas thought, like many since, that worldly wealth is gain, no matter how procured. He sold his Master for a price and transferred his allegiance for which he received full pay in Satan's coin of misery and death.

The fight went on, and Christ was crucified, but He was not defeated, for He held power over death. He yielded of His own volition that, dying, He might conquer death and thereby open the door which Adam had closed in Eden. Even in death Christ was victorious, for He achieved the purpose of His earth life to break the bonds of death, to come forth from the grave and insure man's resurrection.

His little band of loyal followers continued faithful unto death, and

death it was for most of them, including the apostles. Apostasy became universal, and Satan revelled throughout the Dark Ages when it seemed that his sovereignty was established.

But special messengers were sent to earth to effect a reformation and prepare the way for the final scene and the promised restoration.

The message of Mormonism is that the plan of salvation of which we've spoken is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was taught in every dispensation from Adam to Malachi and reached its climax in the meridian of time when Christ was resurrected from the dead. From the beginning he had been the central figure of salvation's plan. The Jews had looked forward through the centuries to the coming of Messiah, to a deliverer of the line of David sent of God, but despite the prophecies and the signs that were given them they failed to recognise, Him when He came.

The same prophets who so accurately foretold the earthly advent of Messiah were also given visions and revelations regarding His second coming. Their warning messages are recorded in the Holy Bible, and they are the signs by which the people of the latter days might be forewarned and guided.

For instance, in Psalms we read that fire should devour before Him, while Joel saw as signs of His coming that the moon should be darkened and the stars withdraw their shining. To Zechariah it was revealed that His feet should stand upon the Mount of Olives, which should cleave in the midst thereof toward the East and the West, and Malachi predicted that He would suddenly come to His Temple and that He should be like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. Job referred to our day when he said :

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth (Job 19:25).

While these and many other prophecies were made prior to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, certainly most of the events to which they refer did not occur before his birth nor were they fulfilled during his lifetime.

Many men have tried to appraise Christ since His transcendent ministry began. Their estimates of Him have ranged from blasphemous denunciation to self-sacrificing worship. Some ask whether such a man ever really lived or was He just a myth ; was He an opportunist, sentimentalist, or social revolutionist ; or possibly a man of genius, a wise man, a doer of wonderful works, or a great teacher ? But if we consult the men who were closest to Him, the men who followed Him on to the Mount of Transfiguration, we shall learn that He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matthew 16 : 16).

We ask each to make his own appraisal of Jesus of Nazareth and determine whether or not He is the Christ, the Son of God. For ourselves we humbly bear witness to this transcendent fact. In the Gospel of John He is referred to as the Word, who was with God in the beginning, who was God, by whom all things were made. He was the life and the light of men who was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1 : 1-3, 14).

The Apostle Paul declared :

God. . . .

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds ; (Hebrews 1 : 1-2).

And in the eighth verse of the same chapter he said :

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom (Hebrews 1 : 8).

It is doubtful if his divinity, His power, and His leadership were ever challenged with such audacity and ferocity as they are being challenged now. Never in history have the common people of the world felt the need of Divine leadership as they feel it in this bewildered world. There never was a time which needed Him more, as false ideologies and scientific miracles are leading the world to the brink of annihilation.

There are men and nations today who are attempting to displace God, to ban religion, and to make this a Godless world. The present war between Christ and anti-Christ is a fulfilment of prophecy and is itself a harbinger or forerunner of the Millenium.

We plead with all Christians everywhere to attest their faith in Him by keeping His commandments. His work of redemption is not complete nor will it be until His Gospel is written in the lives and hearts of men. The fact that he was resurrected from the dead—the best attested fact in history —assures us that He still lives. He has promised that he will come again. All who read the prophecies of scripture and note the signs of our own times must be convinced that we are living in the last days, that the great events foretold by the prophets have been and are being enacted on the stage of contemporary history. Let us recognise in current events the portents, or prognosis of the great finale.

John, while on the Isle of Patmos, saw in vision things to come ; heard ten thousand angels singing praises to the Son of God. And they joined with every creature in earth and heaven—all with one accord were saying :

. . *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* (Revelation 5 : 13)

An he saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, saw him bring to earth the Gospel for every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. He saw the lake without a bottom, and the dragon bound with chains, saw one thousand years of concord, peace and rest. And he saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, with his earthly kingdom to be joined.

Then he saw the small and great ones stand before the throne of God to be judged out of the records each according to his merits. Death and hell released their captives, and the sea gave up its dead, while the angels sang hosannah to the Prince of Peace, their Lord.

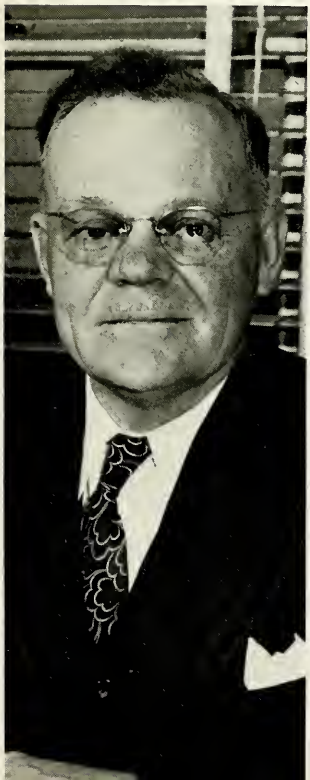
We bear humble testimony that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour and Redeemer of the world and that He will return and reign personally upon the earth. At that time the people on the earth will join with the hosts of heaven and sing: "The kingdom of this world is become of our Lord, And of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." This testimony we bear to all the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

DECEMBER

8

In the PATH that JESUS TROD

BY ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
TWELVE APOSTLES



Elder Marion G. Romney

TO seek the Father's will and to comply therewith does not mean abject submission to an arbitrary superior force, but rather bringing ourselves into harmony with the laws and principles prevailing in an orderly universe. It is the only way by which ye may be at peace in the earth and eventually rise to our high destiny as the children of God.

It is the path trod by our Saviour. He is our great example. The earliest words spoken by Him of which we have record were, as recorded in the *Pearl of Great Price*: " . . . Father thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever " (Moses 4 : 2). You are all familiar with the setting. It was in the spirit world when the Father's plan, where by his children would be advanced to their second estate, was submitted.

The plan required a redeemer. Two of the Father's sons presented themselves for that important role—Jesus and Lucifer. The offer of Jesus was sublime in its simple grandeur. " Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." This statement reveals at once the greatness of His soul and also the source of His strength and power.

Lucifer's offer was not in the same sweet, humble spirit. He was conscious that he had a brilliant intellect, and he wanted to be independent in the use of his own intelligence. He could not bring himself to consecrate his powers to the doing of the Father's will; he wanted the Father's glory; and so he proposed a substitute plan of his own. It was of course, unworkable because conceived in darkness, as is every plan which is contrary to the Father's will, and was rejected.

Jesus was chosen to be the Redeemer. Lucifer and his followers, instead of submitting to the decision and bringing themselves into harmony with the will of the Father, rebelled, waged war in heaven, and were cast out.

They have never since enjoyed peace and contentment and they never will, for they cannot say, in the spirit of Jesus, " Father, thy will be done," and there is no one in heaven, whether heaven is thought of as a place or a condition, who is not in harmony with the Father's will.

In fulfillment of the Father's plan, Jesus came to earth and here, as before, taught by precept and example the truth that the way to peace and happiness and union with God is to learn His Will and do it.

He taught us to pray unto the Father :

. . . Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6 : 10).

And the Sermon on the Mount :

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 7 : 21.)

When the Jews marvelled at His teachings, He declared :

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7 : 16-17.)

Urged by His disciples to eat, He said :

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me. (John 4 : 34.) *I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge : and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.* (John 5 : 30.) *I am come from heaven, . . . not to do mine own will, but the*

will of him that sent me. (John 6:38.)

Jesus held true to this course, even through Gethsemane where He bore the sins of all men through suffering which caused Him—

. . . to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit. (Doc. and Cov. 19:18.)

As He came to the climax of that suffering, He cried out in agony:

. . . Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (Luke 22:42.)

Thus He partook and finished His preparations unto the children of men as He had undertaken them, submissive to and guided by "the Father's will."

What a difference it would make in the conditions of the world today if all leaders of nations and all peoples were seeking to know and do the Father's will. What peace would come into the world and what peace does come into the hearts of individuals as they acquire such a state of mind and and act upon it!

The happiest and most successful people in the earth are those who, knowing the will of the Father, are living in harmony therewith. On the other hand, the most conscientious, distressed, and miserable people on the earth are those who know His will and who do not live in harmony with it.

We members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are in a unique position with reference to this matter because we know that the Lord has revealed, and is continuing to reveal, to our generation His will concerning us, and *we profess to accept it.* This leaves us no excuse and no escape. Each of us is destined to be happy and at peace, or miserable and contentious. Many have already chosen their places; others are moving into position. Our status will depend upon how nearly we do the Father's will now, and how faithful we are in continuing to do it to the end of our mortal lives.

As we seek to understand the Father's will, it may be well for us to keep in mind some well-known fundamentals. The first to which I invite your attention is that the rules of conduct prescribed for us in the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants are statements of the Father's will as to how we should live our mortal lives, and that these standards were not formulated by men, and therefore men cannot change them. Their observance is a purifying and sanctifying process, by which we come into union with God and thereby enjoy peace and happiness. To know them and fail to strive to live them is to invite certain distress and unhappiness.

To illustrate: Recently a friend of mine came to me with this problem.

LULLA MYN LYKING

I saw a fair Mayden syttin and sing,
She lulled a lyttel Childe,
A sweete Lording.

Lulla lay, lulla lay,
Lullay my dere herte
Myn own dere derling.

That same Lord is He that made alle thing,
Of alle Lord is He is
Lord of alle kynges Kyng.

There was a mickle melody at that Chylde's birth
Alle that were in heav'nly bliss,
They made mickly mirth.

Angels bright sang their song to that Chyld,
Blyssid be Thou, and so be She,
So meek and so myld.

"The Church," he said, "is suffering the loss of the loyalty and services of many able members who feel that they are being driven away from the Church and are thus deprived of the communion to which they are entitled, because our leaders put so much stress upon what, to them, are unimportant rules of conduct, such as the non-use of tea, coffee, tobacco, and intoxicating beverages." He wondered if the rules as to these things and such other, to them, such minor things as the payment of tithing and the keeping of the Sabbath day holy, could not be relaxed so that such persons would not feel out of harmony or be embarrassed in the Church.

Now, it is not the desire of the Church nor of any man or woman in the Church who has the spirit of the gospel, to discomfort or embarrass or drive away any person from the purifying and sanctifying influences of the gospel, any person, be he in or out of the Church. Rather, it is their desire to take every person where he now is and build him up, lead him step by step along the straight and narrow path of conforming with gospel standards, until he finds peace and happiness in doing the will of the Father.

This, however, cannot be done by condoning non-compliance with the rules of conduct which the Lord has prescribed, nor by presuming to change them. The words of Jesus were, "Take *my yoke* upon you." He did not say come on your own terms, but—

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matt. 11:29.)

The Lord has never revealed a way whereby we can enjoy that rest unto our souls without taking His yoke upon us. The acceptance of the commandments in the Doctrine and Covenants as an expresison to us individually of the will of our Father in heaven as to how we should live, and an earnest effort to abide thereby, will do much to bring peace and happiness while we live in the earth, and to assure us of great joy in the world to come.

Another fundamental to bear in mind in our search is that the manifestations of the Father's will to this generation did not cease with what is written in the Doctrine and Covenants. He has not left us unguided to jangle over the interpretations of those revelations, nor does He leave us ignorant of His will on current issues. He has given us living prophets to interpret those revelations and to declare to us His will on present problems.

When the Lord opened up this dispensation, He chose and appointed the Prophet Joseph Smith through whom to reveal His will. And the peoples of the earth were put under obligation to hear Him. More than a year before

the Church was organised, the Lord said to the Prophet:

. . . *this generation shall have my word through you.* (Doc. and Cov. 5:10.)

And He further declared that woe should come upon the inhabitants of the earth if they did not hearken unto His words.

As long as the Prophet lived, the Lord revealed His will to that generation through him. And it is significant how much of what he revealed dealt with the issues of that day.

Since the Prophet's martyrdom, the will of the Lord has been given through succeeding prophets, Presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith and David O. McKay, who each in his turn has presided over the Church, and, like unto Moses, has guided the people of his generation on the issues of their day by the spirit of revelation. (See D. & C. 107: 91; 8: 2-3.)

During the administrations of all these leaders, those who have accepted them as prophets, who have truly believed that by the spirit of revelation they spoke the Father's will on the issues of the day, who have adjusted their thinking, their living, and their feelings to harmonise with the spirit and the letter of the words of these living prophets—they are the ones who have been comforted and who have had peace in their souls.

Today the Lord is revealing His will to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to members of the Church in particular, on the issues of this our day through the living prophets, with the First Presidency at the head. What they say as a presidency is what the Lord would say if He were here in person.

This is the rock foundation of Mormonism. If it ever ceases to be the fact, this will be an apostate Church. But it will never cease to be the fact. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was asked what the difference was between the Latter-day Saint Church and the sectarian churches of the world, he said, "We have the Holy Ghost," by which he meant that by the power of the Holy Ghost the will of the Father is revealed to the minds of the leaders of this Church.

So I repeat again, what the presidency say as a presidency is what the Lord would say if he were here, and it is scripture. It should be studied, understood, and followed, even as the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and other scriptures.

Those who follow this course will not interpret what they say as being inspired by political bias or selfishness; neither will they say that the brethren are uninformed as to the circumstances of those affected by their counsel; or that their counsels cannot be accepted because they are not prefaced by the quotation, "Thus saith the Lord."

Those, and I testify to this out of my own experience, who will through mighty prayer and earnest study inform themselves as to what these living prophets say, and act upon it, will be visited by the spirit of the Lord and know by the spirit of revelation that they speak the mind and will of the Father.

This is a day of great conflict between truth and error, Satan is having a field day with the souls of men. Antichrists stalk the earth in all lands, including our own. False philosophies and doctrines emanating from the prince of darkness are being presented in such appealing manner as almost to deceive the very elect. There is only one sure way to divine the truth from the error. That is to learn what the mind and will of the Father is on these matters, and then do it.

If there be those among us who feel aggrieved, out of harmony, or to criticise what the Presidency say on the burning issues of our times, it would be well to remember that these prophets are but declaring to us the will of the Father, and that the only open road to peace and happiness is to bring ourselves into harmony therewith.

May the Lord help each of us to have a consuming desire to know and do His will, and to recognise that His will is made known to us and all peoples of this generation through the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the interpretations and counsels of the living prophets.

DECEMBER

9

A PRAYER

LORD, not for light in darkness do we pray,
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,
Not for the slow ascension of our day be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,
Not for the remission of the peril and stings
Of time and fate.

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end
Whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid,
Nor that the little healing that we lend
Shall be repaid.

* * *

Not these. We know the hemlock from the rose,
The pure from stained, the noble from the base,
The tranquil holy light of truth that glows
On Pity's face.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent;
But Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need.
Give us to build above the deep intent
The deed, the deed.

JOHN DRINKWATER

DECEMBER 10

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLD FORT

FROM THE WRITINGS OF
ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG OF THE
FIRST COUNCIL OF SEVENTY

A CHRISTMAS ON THE MARCH

Pioneer Christmas

THE first Christmas spent by the pioneers in Utah was one of thanksgiving. Food was scarce and most of the people were housed in the Old Fort. While the winter was a mild one, there was intense suffering, especially among the women and children.

There was a Christmas spirit on the 25th of December in the camp of the pioneers. There were no Christmas gifts as we have them today, but there was the larger thought of goodwill and mutual helpfulness. Everybody was ready to help and to share. The finer instincts of religion and morals were manifested in clean thoughts and good deeds.

Mrs. Elizabeth Huffaker, a pioneer of 1847, has written the following:

"I remember our first Christmas in the valley. We all worked as usual. The men gathered sage-brush, and some even ploughed, for, though it had snowed, the ground was still soft, and the ploughs were used nearly the entire day. Christmas came on Saturday.

"We celebrated the day on the Sabbath, when we all gathered round the flagpole in the centre of the fort, and there we held meeting. And what a meeting it was. We sang praise to God; we all joined in the opening prayer, and the speaking that day has always been remembered. There were words of thanksgiving and cheer. The people were hopeful and buoyant, because of their faith in the great work they were undertaking. After the meeting, there was handshaking all around. Some wept for joy, the children played in the enclosure, and around the sage-brush fire that night we gathered and sang:

"Come, come ye Saints,
No toil nor labour fear,
But with joy wend your way."

"That day we had boiled rabbit and a little bread for our dinner. Father had shot some rabbits, and it was a feast we had. All had enough to eat. In the sense of perfect peace and good-will, I never had a happier Christmas in all my life."

In the pioneer homes and towns of Utah, Christmas Day was always fittingly celebrated. But in those fargone days the children were taught to appreciate any little gift. There was no store full of toys, as we have them today.

The gift was always an expression of the great love of the giver. Sometimes a man gave a beaver-skin or a buffalo robe to his wife and children. The gift made all happy.

* * *

Mormon Battalion

THE Mormon Battalion was a command of United States Soldiers, who, at the call of their country, marched from Council Bluffs to San Diego in California in the year 1846-47.

It is one of the famous marches of history, and will ever stand out as

DECEMBER 11

COME COME YE SAINTS

WORDS: WILLIAM CLAYTON
MUSIC: OLD ENGLISH TUNE

one of the historic movements in the development of the far West.

When the war with Mexico broke out, the President of the United States called upon the Mormons for a battalion of men to help in the cause. In June 1846, Captain Allen arrived in Council Bluffs, and asked President Young for 500 men to march into California and to reinforce the United States army which was concentrating along the Rio Grande.

Within a few days the battalion was ready, and the young men of the Mormon camps were enlisted for one year in the service of their country.

Imagine the feelings of the pioneers when they received word that the fathers and sons must enlist and go to war. The mothers of the young men wept to think of the sacrifice; the young wives were broken-hearted. Yet they did not say a word nor do a thing to discourage the men. In fact, the women were willing that their husbands and sons should give all for their country, and they determined to place their faith in God and suffer, and be strong.

It was a time of bitter trial as it was to the pioneers, and when the time for parting came, the sorrow at leaving their families was almost more than the men could stand.

The soldiers were poorly clad; and could they have foreseen the long journey over desert wastes and mountain passes, we sometimes wonder if they could have met their trials. But their courage was equal to the task before them, and the men set out unafraid.

The route of the soldiers was by way of Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe, thence down the Rio Grande for some 300 miles, then almost due west by way of the Gila River to the Colorado and on to San Diego.

It led through burning deserts, over vast stretches of miry clay, and through beds of shifting sands. With ropes fastened about their shoulders, the men drew the wagons up steep mountainsides; with pick, axe and crowbar they widened passages of solid rock. They assisted their emaciated animals over mountain heights while they themselves were half-starved.

For ninety miles they marched through the scorching sands of the American Desert without seeing a drop of water save in the deep wells which they themselves dug.

The chaplain of the battalion was David Pettigrew, who has left a diary of the journey which will take its place as among the most famous of American history. He tells us many incidents of the march. One part of his journal reads:

Dec. 18, 1846. This morning we took up our march for the Gila River, but between us and that place was a vast desert without water, or feed for the mules. We travelled forty-five miles and camped without water.

Dec. 19. We started without water and travelled all day and part of the night, and camped without water. We were all weary and fatigued, and we could hardly get along, the weather being very warm. Towards evening, the men might be seen lying down on the road, overpowered by fatigue and thirst.

December 25. It is Christmas Day. We are without food or water.

1. Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor la - bor fear; But with joy wend your way. Though hard to you this jour - ney may ap - pear,
2. Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard? 'Tis not so; all is right. Why should we think to earn a great re - ward,
3. We'll find the place which God for us pre - pared, Far a - way in the West, Where none shall come to hurt or make a - fraid;
4. And should we die be - fore our jour-ney's through, Hap - py day! all is well! We then are free from toil and sor - row, too;
Grace shall be as your day. 'Tis bet - ter far for us to strive Our use - less cares from us to drive; Do
If we now shun the fight? Gird up your loins; fresh cour - age take; Our God will nev - er us for - sake; And
There the Saints will be blessed. We'll make the air with mu - sic ring, Shout prais - es to our God and King; A -
With the just we shall dwell! But if our lives are spared a - gain To see the Saints their rest oh - tain, O
this, and joy your hearts will swell– All is well! all is well!
soon we'll have this tale to tell– All is well! all is well!
hove the rest these words we'll tell– All is well! all is well!
how we'll make this cho - rus swell– All is well! all is well!

You cannot gift-wrap the wond

DECEMBER

12

BY JOY BUCHERITE OF THE GARDEN PARK WARD, SALT LAKE. JOY WAS AN OUTSTANDING TEENAGER UP TO HER DEATH A FEW MONTHS AGO

AT this time of the year someone is likely to say to us with a sigh, "Christmas isn't Christmas any more. It's too commercialised."

Christmas commercialised? Let us not for one moment believe it!

One cannot package the angels' song, or gift-wrap the wonder of the shepherds to sell across a counter, and the star that guided the Wise Men would burn through any material that mankind might try to wrap about it... for Christmas is more than the exchange of gifts.

Christmas is a magical season, certain of its powers and sure of its own indestructibility.

Under the Christmas Star we are participants in its glory, aware of heavenly things as at no other season of the year, loving God and loving one another. No-one hangs a wreath or trims a tree without some thought of Bethlehem and its manger.

Is someone lost, afraid, unloved or outcast? Christmas will take him to its heart. Christmas will raise up friends and brothers, and like the returned prodigal son, he will find himself clothed and feasted with a ring of fellowship on his fingers. Let any anguished cry be heard at Christmas time and the whole world rushes to relieve it, to comfort, reassure and plenish.

New love walks bravely in a world that only yesterday denied it, and the hearts men thought were hard open to every plea and the world is full of selfless giving, for now, as at no other time, we do indeed become our brother's keeper.

How clearly the Christ child teaches us at Christmas time that God's greatest gift to us is *His own love*. The gifts we give in turn are bright with it. How carefully we choose the card ; how patiently we search for the one thing that will bring happiness to the recipient ; how joyfully we spend our time, our money and ourselves.

There are no strangers in this blessed season. In town and countryside, on

er of Christmas

shops far out at sea, in far-off tropic islands and the bleakest frozen ice-fields of the poles, the light of Christmas burns with steadfast cheer; the carols lift heart-warming melody; the tale of Bethlehem renews itself.

No, one cannot package Christmas. It will not be contained. It penetrates with ease the stoutest prison wall and something of its glory touches the hardest heart.

The miracle of Christmas is wholly of the spirit. We cannot shape it with our hands, purchase it with our gold, impound it for our own selfish pleasure. It must be shared in love and honour; it must be accepted with humility; it must be believed in with the utmost reaches of the heart.

Here is a light to live by, a love that never fails, a steadfast haven from the world's assaults, a faith that lifts our lives above the commonplace. If we are overshadowed with tasks, responsibilities and unusual cares, then let us pause awhile under the Christmas Star; hang the final wreath, arrange the last thread of tinsel on the tree, finish the bow upon the last small gift and snatch a moment's time for rest and reverence.

Alone at last with God, let the heart's door swing aside. There is time now for the Eastern kings, time for the kneeling shepherds and the light-crowned hill, and even time for the lowly stable and the Christ child.

No man can count our wealth in such an hour; none can ever take from us this wonder and this joy. For this indeed is Christmas—whole, imperishable and undimmed; this is the holy light, the warm belonging, the arm of God about our shoulders, the all-encompassing brightness in which we hear again the angelic song: "*On earth peace, good will toward men.*"

WAS THERE A STAR?

". . . and behold the voice of the Lord came unto him (Nephi), saying:

"Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets."

"And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken; for behold at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came"

"For they knew that the prophets had testified of these things for many years, and that the sign which had been given was already at hand; and they began to fear because of their iniquity and unbelief."

"And it came to pass also that a new star did appear, according to the word."

3 NEPHI 1: 12, 13, 15, 18, 21

DECEMBER

14

Women are essential in God's plan

FAR ABOVE RUBIES

WHO can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out at night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongues is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

PROVERBS 31 : 10-31

IN 1842 new members of the Church were coming to Nauvoo from many directions to " gather with the Saints." Many of them came from Europe. Some had modest means, some were penniless, none was wealthy. As members of the Church they firmly believed that they were in truth " brothers " and " sisters " and felt responsible for each other.

At the founding meeting of the society, the Prophet Joseph Smith made clear that its chief purpose was to serve the needy. The name chosen by the women at their first meeting clearly expresses this purpose. At the second meeting President Emma Smith suggested that it might be well to appoint a committee to seek out the needy. No action was taken at that time, but on July 18, 1843, a committee of sixteen was appointed " to search out the poor and suffering, and to call upon the rich for aid, and thus, as far as possible, relieve the wants of all."

The Prophet Joseph Smith agreed with the women in this objective. At one of the early meetings he remarked:

" This charitable Society is according to your natures; it is natural for females to have feelings of charity. You are now placed in a situation where you can act according to these sympathies which God has planted in your bosoms . . . If you live up to your privileges the angels cannot be restrained from being your associates." (D.H.C. Vol. IV p. 605)

Yet it is evident that the Prophet had a larger vision of the purposes of this organisation. He understood the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the purposes of the Church. He knew that women are as essential as men in God's plan. He knew that without the intelligent, willing help of the women, the men could not succeed in their assignments. He understood the importance of good wives and good

BY SISTER MILDRED EYRING
MEMBER OF THE GENERAL
BOARD OF RELIEF SOCIETY

mothers. In the counsel he gave the Relief Society leaders continually during the last two years of his life there is abundant evidence of his larger vision.

The minutes of the first meeting state:

" The meeting was addressed by President Joseph Smith to illustrate the object of the Society—that the Society of sisters might provoke the brethren to good works in looking to the wants of the poor, searching after objects of charity and in administering to their wants; to assist by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the community . . ."

At the sixth meeting he said:

" Let this Society teach women how to behave toward their husbands, to treat them with mildness and affection. When a man is borne down with trouble—if he can meet a smile instead of—a murmur—if he can meet with mildness, it will calm down his soul." (D.H.C. Vol. IV, p. 606)

The following are excerpts from the minutes which record his instructions to the Society on various occasions:

" This Society is not only to relieve the poor but to save souls. . . . Let your labours be confined mostly to those around you in your own circle. As far as knowledge is concerned it may extend to all the world. . . . You should be armed always with mercy

. . . have mercy on one another . . . Be pure in heart. . . . Work together. . . . Respect and hold sacred the confidences of one another. . . . Search yourselves . . . the tongue is an unruly member . . . hold your tongues about things of no moment . . . Females are also subject to overmuch zeal which . . . must cause them to be rigid in religious capacity. . . . Be prudent, repent, reform, but do it in a way not to destroy all around you. . . ."

Later President Brigham Young gave similar instructions:

"These societies are for the improvement of our manners, our dress, our habits, and our methods of living." (J.D. 19:68)

". . . If you see any ladies in need, find something for them to do that will enable them to sustain themselves; but do not relieve the idle, those who are able but unwilling to work." (J.D. 14:107)

". . . sisters of experience, teach the young girls not to be so anxious for the gratification of their imaginary wants, but to confine themselves to their real necessities." (J.D. 12:201)

Every President of the Church has guided the developing work of the Society in similar ways.

The world has changed greatly since 1842. The purposes of God "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39) have not changed. The position of women has changed very much, but the purposes for which she was created have not changed. One of the great purposes of Relief Society has been to teach women their true place in God's kingdom, to help them to realise that God loves them very much and has blessed them with powers and privileges which men do not have, and that He has given men powers and responsibilities which wise women do not covet. "Male and female created he them."

Many attempts have been made by various groups of women during the past century to gain what they term "equal rights." The Relief Society has held a different point of view. Women, as citizens, should have equal opportunities to develop themselves in every way, but if they could be given complete equality with men, they would necessarily lose their special place as women. The purpose of Relief Society has always been to help women to be happy and successful in their eternal assignment as women, to be good women, good wives, good mothers, good neighbours, good citizens, worthy daughters of God.

Often people expect to be given things which cannot, in fact, be given. Strength, skill, understanding, success, joy, cannot be given by one person to another. Each individual must earn them; each must "work out his own salvation." In planning the work of Relief Society, the General Board has always tried to make the path to the ultimate goals of the Society possible and pleasant for the women of the Church to follow. The path is always upward, however, and strength and determination are necessary in climbing. The goals of Relief Society can be reached if each member understands what they are and climbs steadily and confidently toward them.

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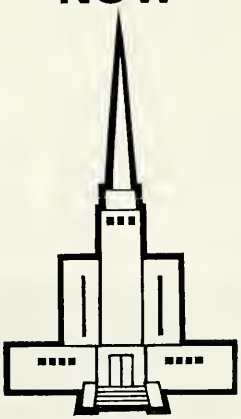

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The 2½-minute Testimony

BY LYNN S. RICHARDS
ASST. GEN. SUPERINTENDENT
DESERET SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

"THE Gospel of Jesus Christ is a pattern for joyous, purposeful, fruitful, righteous living." For us to understand what is contained in the Gospel, we must study it. The Lord has said to us that "The Glory of God is Intelligence" (Doctrine and Covenants 93 : 36.) And again he has said, "Study my word which has gone forth among the children of men." (Doctrine and Covenants 11 : 22.) The assignment of the two-and-a-half minute talk gives an opportunity to study more fully the principles of the Gospel.

The two-and-a-half minute talk makes it possible to bear testimony to the truths of the Gospel we have learned. It is a valuable opportunity to give vocal expression to our thoughts and feelings. This is an essential part of the Sunday School function.

A two-and-a-half minute talk is supposed to be just two-and-a-half minutes long. It usually follows the song practice and comes before the sacrament hymn. It is an important part of the worship service.

The Sunday School Superintendent assigns THREE MONTHS in advance to the teacher of a class the responsibility for choosing the persons to give the talks.

The two-and-a-half minute talks in the Senior Sunday School are given by members of Courses 6 to 19. This means that children from eight years of age to young adults not over twenty-one years of age will be assigned the talks by the teacher. Two-and-a-half minute talks are not given in the Junior Sunday School to children in Courses 1 to 5. In this age group, the teacher assists the student in giving inspirational thoughts.

In the first month after the teacher is to make an assignment to students out of the lesson manual to the members of the class. These students perform their assignments in class. It is wise for the teacher to help the student outline the assigned subject. The subject should be clearly stated with two or three points to be studied and reported. It is well also to indicate on the assignment paper to tell the student the reference to the book or magazine to be studied where the answers to the questions may be found.

The student recites his assignments before the class. A discussion usually follows. The students ask questions, the teacher or the students answer them. After the discussion the teacher decides who will give the two-and-a-half minute talks in the worship service of the Sunday School. Two persons are chosen. Each then prepares his material for the talk.

The outline has been begun and it now becomes necessary to enlarge upon it and fill in the suggested material that results from the lesson discussion. When all of the subject matter is brought together and considered, it is then necessary to put the information in form for the two-and-a-half minute talk.

Each student is urged to use his or her own words. He talks about the principles, stories, or instances that are given as he understands them. Some prefer to talk from notes. These notes may be on small cards. The full statement may be written out or in an outline of the points to be discussed. Others may prefer to write out the talk (preferably in their own words) and memorise it. This often gives confidence to the student and avoids his being frightened when appearing before the Sunday School.

In speaking before the congregation, the speaker must remember that every person in the room must hear his message. He must speak loudly, distinctly and clearly, not fast. He should speak each word so that it is understood.

He should not apologise or make excuses. Forget yourself, and think of the subject. The members of the Sunday School want to hear your message.

Go directly to your subject. Regard the assignment as an opportunity to bear your testimony to the truth of the principles about which you are to speak. If you believe the principles to be true, bear your testimony to the other members of the Sunday School by telling them that you believe the principles that you have discussed to be true. This will help them believe and will develop your knowledge and testimony of the Gospel. You may bear your testimony in the name of Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER

15

IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

I love the stillness of the Church,
The reverent spirit there,
As little children bow their heads.
And join in morning prayer.

Are you fit to be a Mormon?

BY FLORENCE B. PINNOCK
OF THE YWMIA GEN. BOARD

IN our day and age of modern conveniences that take the work out of even small chores, there is a real and glaring need of a physical nature. The human body is subject to a basic and often forgotten law which says that in disuse there is atrophy and decay. Muscles left idle and hungry for activity soon lose their ability to perform and become small and flabby. They no longer are contracting, working fibres so needed in the body for motion, agility, beauty, posture, protection, and emotional well being.

As Mormons we have declared to the world that we are a healthier people. We claim that through our "Word of Wisdom" comes great advantages toward a more efficient mind and body. This is, of course, true, but we can not find any statement in the revealed document which says this is an overall rule of health and is complete within itself. We must practice many other basic known principles of good health.

We may refrain from smoking and at the same time not get sufficient rest and find that we have destroyed our ability to be effective in almost every worthwhile pursuit in life. One may abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and at the same time overeat to the point that good health is lost and mind and body is burdened with a great task of transporting, feeding, and displaying excess baggage. We may leave tea and coffee out of the daily diet and at the same time fail to get proper exercise and find we have deprived ourselves of great happiness and efficiency.

How we look and how we feel has a lot to do with how we work, how we impress people, how we meet new challenges and responsibilities. How effective do you think your testimony on the "Word of Wisdom" will be to the peoples of the world if you stand before them with bulging abdomen, sagging shoulders, and the general appearance of weakness and softness way beyond your years. The first impression we leave with others is often the only impression we have the opportunity to leave. We often hear the statement that "you can recognise a Latter-day Saint by the look on his face." How much better it would be if we could say, "You can recognise a Latter-day Saint by his carriage and posture, his energy and enthusiasm, and zest for life itself."

Without question the Lord expects us to develop our bodies and to take care of them just as He expects us to develop our talents and put them to use. Most responsibilities in doing the Lord's work require patience, energy, strength, and even endurance; be ready to do your part.

You may ask the question, "How do I get fit and help my family do the same?" Here are a few suggestions.

1. Plan family fun and recreation which involves large muscle exercise. This will not only be enjoyable and health giving, but will tend to bring the family closer together.

2. Participate in the many MIA activities which stimulate use and growth of our intellects, our talents, and our physical bodies.

3. Eat wisely and regularly from a wide variety of wholesome foods. Remember it is better to waste food than to store it in excess on the body.

4. Get a list of postural exercises and spend five minutes each day on these calisthenics.

5. Take pride in your personal dress and grooming. An important part of good posture and body carriage lies in standing tall and wanting to be seen. Make sure that there is modesty in your dress and mannerisms, for this blends well with pride in your appearance.

6. Get adequate rest that your mind and body may meet each new day with enthusiastic anticipation.

7. As a family walk or ride bicycles to school and work whenever possible. Take family hikes and bicycle excursions for holiday outings.

8. Learn to enjoy the great out-of-doors, camping, hunting, fishing, nature hikes, etc.

There are many kinds of fitness, fitness for almost every occasion; but generally there are three groupings: mental, physical, and spiritual. These three are inter-related and interdependent upon each other. We must not only think and act like Latter-day Saints, but also look like Latter-day Saints. Be fit to wear the name of Mormon in every sense of the word.

I love to listen to the words
That little children say:
"Our kindly Father up in Heav'n
Accept our thanks this day."

I love to listen to their songs
Of happiness and joy;
And watch the smile light up the face
Of each dear girl and boy.

I love the organ's pealing note,
The mem'ry gems so sweet,
I love the stories that are told,
The poems we repeat.

I love to watch the teacher's face
As children learn to share;
I love to be in Sunday School
Our Heavenly Father's there.

DECEMBER

16

Distance trouble? Hold a Home Primary

BY SISTER EILEEN R. DUNYON
OF THE PRIMARY ASSOCIATION
GENERAL BOARD

Sister Eileen R. Dunyon

JIMMY kicked the back door open, slammed it shut behind him, jerked a kitchen chair to attention, sat down on it, propped his chin on his hand, and stared straight ahead. He was eight years old. His dark hair lay in wisps against his soiled face which was the texture and temperature of a sun-ripened peach which had just fallen from grace.

"I'm not going to Primary," he said defiantly. "Not ever. It's too far to walk, and it takes too long to get home again."

Jimmy's mother turned away with tears in her eyes and a heavy heart. How could she provide a Primary for her son ? It was a long way. Two miles is a long walk when a boy is tired from school and the days are short. And yet, Primary was necessary in his life. Primary is necessary in the lives of all boys and girls who need to be taught to pray and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

All over the world there are many boys like Jimmy who are unable to attend Primary because of distance involved or other factors. For these reasons Home Primaries are an important part of the Primary programme.

Jimmy's mother had heard about Home Primaries but she had many questions in her mind which needed to be answered. She needed to know the following:

1, How can I start a Home Primary ?
Answer: The branch president, or in a case where a branch is not organised the missionaries labour-in the district, may call a mother to conduct and teach a Home Primary.

2, Who attends a Home Primary ?
Answer: The children who live in the neighbourhood, member and non-member, should be invited to attend. Sometimes, the only children attending will be the children of the mother who is teaching the Primary.

3, What lesson material is used ?
Answer: A Primary lesson book is selected that will best suit the ages of the children who will be in one class.

4, Where is the lesson book and other lesson materials obtained ?
Answer: The lesson materials are obtained through the branch Primary president if there is one. If not, they are obtained with the help of the district Primary president.

5, When is a Home Primary held ?
Answer: A regular time should be chosen to hold Primary each week. This time should be the hour that is most convenient for the mother and the children.

6, What procedure do you follow in a Home Primary ?
Asnwer: The same procedure that is followed in a branch Primary. This consists of:

(a) Devotional music a few minutes before beginning time. The children could softly hum with the teacher as they enter the room.

(b) The prayer song is to be sung as the children are in their places. This should be a short song to prepare the children for prayer.

(c) Opening prayer by a child. The child should have been asked to pray in advance and should be standing at the front ready to pray as soon as the song is fiinished.

(d) A one minute greeting by the person conducting. Though short, this greeting should show love and appreciation

for the children and also thank the one who offered the prayer.

(e) A brief presentation of the standard. This should help promote reverence.

() A time of singing songs together. In the ten-minute singing time, the children sing the familiar songs they love, and they learn new ones.

(g) Class time or lesson time. Allow forty minutes for the lesson time. The lesson to be presented during this time should be well prepared if it is to affect the lives of the children.

(h) Dismiss with prayer at the close of the class. The children usually give this prayer but the teacher may also take a turn to show the children by example how to pray.

7. How is the attendance of the children reported ?

Answer: A report of attendance should be kept and given weekly to the branch Primary president and added to the branch report. If a branch Primary is not organised, the Home Primary should post its weekly report directly to the district Primary president.

8. What can I do to make my Home Primary effective ?

Answer: The following is a true example from a district Primary supervisor. It will help to make a Home Primary effective.

Each Primary day the children came in the back door and visited and played awhile before Primary began. This gave them a chance to release some of the energy stored up during school hours. The living-room was kept as an orderly and reverent meeting place.

When it was announced that Primary would begin, without further comment, the children formed an orderly line and walked past a small table. Each picked up a coloured card with his name printed on it and placed it on a posting chart. Across the top of the chart was printed, "I am my Heavenly Father's child." Below were the names of the children who seemed to bear witness by their actions that they were Heavenly Father's children and loved to hear His teachings.

The children took turns in the privilege of hanging the "Be Reverent" banner on the wall and a sign on the front door which said :

Primary is in session.
Would you please call back
after 5 o'clock ?

A glance at the prayer chart told who would open and close with prayer. This too was considered a great privilege ; non-members as well as members gladly shared this responsibility. The spirit the teacher radiated in this service was a testimony to all. She was so close to those children that it was thrilling to see how the children were growing in an understanding of the gospel and love for our Heavenly Father.

(Maralyn Johnson—
Northern States Mission)

Many great things have come from small beginnings. There are wards and branches in existence today because of the efforts of a mother like Jimmy's who started a Home Primary.

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DECEMBER 17

Bible Stories for Children

1 : GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

BY EMMA MARR PETERSEN

IN the days of old King Herod, there lived a beautiful young woman named Mary. Her home was in the little city of Nazareth, not far from the city of Jerusalem.

Mary had a cousin named Elizabeth, who lived in the hill country nearby. Elizabeth was much older than Mary, and although she had been married for a long time, she had never been blessed with children. Her husband was a priest in the temple. His name was Zacharias. Elizabeth and Zacharius had prayed many times that the Lord would send them a child.

One day an angel of the Lord came to Zacharias in the temple, telling him that the Lord would at last answer their prayers. He said, "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."

The angel told Zacharias that when John grew to be a man he would be a prophet of the Lord, sent to prepare the way for the Saviour who was soon to come into the world.

Zacharias could hardly believe the angel's message, and asked, "How shall I know this for I am an old man and my wife is well advanced in years?" The angel said, "I am Gabriel. I stood in the presence of God and am sent to speak unto thee and show thee these glad tidings." He told Zacharias that because he had not believed the message, he would be made dumb so that he could not speak until the day when the promise would be fulfilled.

After the angel had disappeared Zacharias went to greet the people who had come to the temple, but he could not speak to them. He made signs to let them know that he was unable to talk.

After six months had passed, the angel Gabriel came again to the earth, this time to give a message to Mary, the young cousin of Elizabeth. He said to her: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.

At first Mary did not understand the meaning. Then he told her that the time had come for Jehovah, the Son of God, to come to earth, and that she had been chosen to be His mother.

"Thou shalt call His name Jesus," the angel said. "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest."

The angel then told Mary that Elizabeth would also have a son. Mary decided to visit Elizabeth, so she went to the hill country where Zacharias and Elizabeth lived. When Elizabeth met her she too said to Mary: Blessed art thou among women. Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

When Elizabeth's son was born the neighbours came to see the new baby.

Our Front Cover picture, "The Nativity," was designed and painted specially for the "Millennial Star" by Elder Jerry Harston, who is in charge of publications and printing at the British Mission Home.

The custom of the Jews was to name their children when they were eight days old. On the eighth day the people who had come to attend the ceremony said that the baby should be named Zacharias after his father, but Elizabeth said, "Not so, he shall be called John." They then asked Zacharias for his choice of a name. He still was unable to speak, so he wrote: "His name is John," which caused the people to wonder, as this name had not been used before in the family.

As soon as Zacharias had written that the child was to be named John, his tongue was loosed and he praised the Lord for his blessings.

Zacharias prophesied and said, "Thou child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways."

DECEMBER 18

A BABE YS BORNE I WYS

15TH CENTURY CAROL

2: JESUS IS BORN

JOSEPH and Mary lived in Nazareth, a little city in Galilee. One day the ruler of the land gave a command that all the people should go to the city of their fathers to be taxed. Joseph was a descendant of King David, and the city of David was a small town called Bethlehem.

As other families in Nazareth left for their home towns, Joseph and Mary started on their journey. Many people belonged to Bethlehem, and the city was overcrowded by the time Joseph and Mary arrived.

They tried to rent a room in the inn, or hotel, but the place was already full. They did not know where to find shelter, and night was coming on. At last they went to a stable and made their bed there.

That night Mary gave birth to her son who had been promised by the angel Gabriel, and she called His name Jesus. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and placed Him in a manger. Jesus was also known as Emmanuel, and Christ the Lord. He is our Redeemer, the Saviour of the world. Mary was his mother; and God was his Father.

The people who lived on the earth did not know that the Son of God was born into the world that night. But the angels knew it, and they sang for joy. Near Bethlehem there were shepherds in the field watching over their flocks of sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, suurrounded by a glorious heavenly light. When the shepherds saw this they were afraid. But the angel said, "Fear not, for behold I bring good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you. Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." The shepherds were overjoyed.

They left their sheep and hurried to the city where they found Mary and Joseph. Looking in the manger near by they saw the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, just as the angel had said. Then they went out praising the Lord. They told other people whom they met about the wonderful announcement of the angel, and of the little babe lying in the manger. Those who heard it wondered what the meaning of it all could be. Mary, who remembered the message of Gabriel, said nothing, but kept it in her heart.

Wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They had seen a new star in the heavens and knew it was a sign of the birth of a child who some day would be King of the Jews. They wished to honour the new-born king.

Going to the palace of King Herod they asked, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen the star in the east and are come to worship him." When King Herod heard this he was fearful that this new-born king would take away his throne.

He called the chief priests together and asked them where, according to the scripture, Christ should be born. They replied, "In Bethlehem in Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet." Herod then asked the wise men when the star appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also."

As they left the palace, the star led them to Mary and Jesus. They rejoiced greatly. After worshipping Jesus, they opened their treasures and gave him gifts of gold and costly perfumes.

Soon afterward Mary and Joseph brought the child to the temple at Jerusalem. They wished to offer a sacrifice to the Lord according to the teachings of Moses. In the temple was an old man named Simeon. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Christ.

When Simeon saw Joseph and Mary with the child in the temple he knew that this little babe was the Christ. He took the child in his arms and praised the Lord and uttered great prophecies concerning him. Then he prayed to God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

A BABE ys borne I wys,
This worlde to joy and blys;
Hys name shall never fade and misse,
And Jhesus is Hys name.

On Cristmasse day at morne,
This childe was i-borne;
To save us alle that were forlorne,
And Jhesus is Hys name.

On Gudde Friday so some,
To dethe he was i-done;
Betwyx all morne and none,
And Jhesus is Hys name.

On Estyr day so swythe,
He rose fro dethe to lyve;
To make us all bothe gladde and blythe,
And Jhesus is Hys name.

On the holy Thursday,
To heven He toke Hys way;
Ther to abyde for ever and ay,
And Jhesus is Hys name.

DECEMBER 19

Alone in the moonlight is better when you aren't

Conducted by
President
MARION D. HANKS

HE was a high school boy, working at Scout camp for the summer and proud of his independence. He didn't want to sound mushy in the letter he was writing to the girl who lived next door but he did miss her and wanted her to know. After repeated efforts, he finally posted the letter in which he glowingly described the mountains and lakes, the forests and streams, the brilliant sun and the gigantic moon seemingly touching the towering peak—and said, "*But you know, Margie, alone in the moonlight is better when you aren't.*"

In truth, *alone* in any satisfying circumstance, or viewing a stirring sight, or having a moving experience, or becoming acquainted with wonderful people is better when one isn't! All that is good and true and beautiful and satisfying to the soul is infinitely more valuable and desirable when shared with those whom we love; it does, in fact, increase with the sharing.

This principle has special meaning and relevance for those who learn the gospel, know the love of God, and get the witness of His Divine Son. Perhaps as well as any source, the *Book of Mormon* exemplifies this truth.

In the marvellous vision recorded in 1 Nephi, Lehi follows the path which leads to the tree of life, which is a representation of the love of God, tastes the fruit of that tree and calls it "most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted," and testifies.

"And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceeding great joy."

Then follows Lehi's wonderful expression of the principle which every child of God must feel when he truly tastes the fruit of the gospel, knows its sweetness, and is filled with the joy of it:

"*. . . wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also;*" (See 1 Nephi 8:8-11.)

And he immediately begins to look for his family to share the joy with them.

How many thousands of times has a father, mother, brother, sister, son, or daughter tasted the sweetness of the fruit and at once been moved with the burning desire that "*my family should partake of it also*"? How many neighbours and true friends? How many missionaries? How many converts? In the early days of the Church the convert of one day became the missionary of the next, and under the stimulation of the same spirit that moved them in those days, the story is the same today. Converts season in the Church a little time and then often

DECEMBER 20

LESSON OF LIFE: EVERY MEMBER A MISSIONARY

1. *READ MOSIAH 28:1-9 OUT LOUD. NOW GO BACK AND READ CHAPTER 27 TO GET THE BACKGROUND. READ AGAIN MOSIAH 28:3.*
   A. What is the point of this great story? Think about it for a few moments as you read another great scripture.
2. *CAREFULLY READ OUT ALOUD 1 NEPHI 8:213. Read against verse 12 and the first part of verse 13.*
   A. What is the special message of this wonderful statement? Do you love anyone very much? Do you enjoy sharing good things with them? Is it a natural instinct to want to share good things?
3. *NOW READ ENOS verses 1-9, especially 9.*
   A. Consider each of the great scriptures you have read. *The sons of Mosiah* had found something of very great value, and they earnestly wanted to share it.

Lehi partook of something that filled his soul with "exceeding great joy," and he immediately "began to be desirous that (his) family should partake of it also."

Enos learned something and immediately "began to feel a desire for the welfare of (his) brethren the Nephites . . ."

WHAT WAS IT THEY HAD ALL RECEIVED?

WHAT DID THEY WANT TO DO ABOUT IT? (Read Enos verse 19. Read Mosiah 28:9 and see Alma Chapters 19 through 26. Consider what Lehi did to bless others because of his faith and desire to share.)

depart to share with others of God's children, their brothers and sisters, the joy which has filled their souls. The receiving and sharing go on, the kingdom rolls forth, the Spirit increases in the earth, the purposes of God for His children are being accomplished.

There is further impressive expression of this principle and spirit in the *Book of Mormon* in the story of Enos, son of Jacob, and there is encouragement also, for earnest parents and teachers who have sought anxiously to teach the gospel to the young without much apparent immediate success. Jacob had taught Enos " in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (*Enos 1*) but seemingly had not really reached his son. How unresponsive Enos had been to his father's teaching, or how far from the truth in principle or conduct, or how long he took to get the desire to know for himself and to cry unto the Lord, we can only conjecture, but the story gives us warrant to suppose that Enos had been somewhat far from the faith.

One day while he was hunting in the forests, the " words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints " sunk deep into his heart, his " soul hungered," and he knelt and cried unto the Lord for a witness and he received it. He heard the voice of the Lord, and was made whole. Enos wrote :

" . . . when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them." (See Enos, verses 1-9.)

Having freely received, this child of God was moved freely to share the marvellous blessing.

It is marvellous to enjoy the sweetness and light and warmth of the gospel, of the love of God, but in truth, *alone* in these things *" is better when you aren't ! "*

4, *WHAT ABOUT EACH OF US WHO HAS RECEIVED THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE RESTORATION ? WHAT IS OUR NATURAL INCLINATION AND RESPONSIBILITY ?*

A. READ *D&C 88 : 81,* especially the last two lines.

READ *Matthew 10 : 8,* especially the last two lines.

AND READ *John 12 : 25, 26.* And read *Mark 8 : 35.*

One of our missionaries had a grandfather who was a learned and wonderful man. One evening shortly before the elder left home for the Mission Field, his grandfather gathered members of his family around him and taught them, quoting extensively from the poets and philosophers and prophets. Marveling at his memory, one of his grandsons asked the venerable, grey-haired man how he could remember so much that was so good. The answer was classic. Said Dr. Driggs: " I gave it and I gave it and I gave it until it was mine."

DISCUSS THIS GREAT STATEMENT. Was Dr. Driggs speaking only of memorisation ? (Obviously not. The great principles he was talking about and about which he was quoting had found place in his character through " giving and giving.")

WHAT HAVE WE RECEIVED THAT IS MOST PRECIOUS ? What is our responsibility. Think again about Lehi and the Sons of Mosiah and about Enos.

OBJECTIVES:

Every member having a reason for the " truth that is in him."

Every member having a desire to share the joy of the Gospel.

Every member growing in love for others so that he/she will want to share the beauty of God's plan.

Every member living the Gospel gratefully, fully, applying the truths of the " Plan of happiness " to life's challenges.

THUS, EVERY MEMBER A MISSIONARY.

DECEMBER 21

A HEALTHY BALANCE

BY DR. WERNHER VON BRAUN
OF THE U.S. SPACE PROGRAMME

" TODAY, more than ever before, our survival—yours and mine and our children's—depends on our adherence to ethical principles. Ethics alone will decide whether atomic energy will be an earthly blessing or the source of mankind's utter destruction.

Where does the desire for ethical action come from? What makes us want to be ethical? I believe there are two forces which move us. One is belief in a Last Judgment when every one of us has to account for what we did with God's great gift of life on the earth. The other is belief in an immortal soul, a soul which will cherish the award or suffer the penalty decreed in a final judgment.

Belief in God and in immortality thus gives us the moral strength and the ethical guidance we need for virtually every action in our daily lives.

In our modern world many people seem to feel that science has somehow made such " religious ideas " untimely or old-fashioned. But I think science has a real surprise for the sceptics. Science, for instance, tells us that nothing in nature, not even the tiniest particle, can disappear without a trace.

Think about that for a moment. Once you do, your thoughts about life will never be the same.

Science has found that nothing can disappear without a trace. Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation !

Now, if God applies this fundamental principle to the most minute and in significant parts of His universe, doesn't it make sense to assume that He applies it also to the masterpiece of His creation—the human soul? I think it does. And everything science has taught me—strengthens my belief in the continuity of our Spiritual existence after death. " Nothing disappears without a trace."

The Church is the instrument through which Priesthood operates

BY HOWARD MAUGHAN
PRESIDENT OF SOUTHEND BRANCH, BRITISH MISSION

PRIESTHOOD is the power and authority of God, by which the world was made. He delegates His priesthood through the Church for the salvation of His children on earth.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said "It is the channel through which the Almighty commenced revealing His glory at the beginning of the creation of the earth, and through which he continued to reveal himself to the children of men to the present time, and through which he will make known His purposes to the end of time."

Priesthood organisation is basic to the organisation of the Church. Under councils of the Priesthood the Church is organised and operates.

The Council of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Council of the Seventy, together with the Presiding Patriarch and the Assistants to the Twelve constitute the General Authorities of the Church.

All regular quorums of the Priesthood excepting the Seventy are presided over by a President and two counsellors. The quorums of Seventy have seven presidents. Priesthood councils of the three are called to serve as leaders in the basic divisions of the Church. Three High Priests serve as a presidency of each stake, likewise three High Priests serve as a bishopric in each Ward.

The same general pattern of organisation is observed in the Missions, with a mission presidency of three in general charge. Districts and branches are organised with a presidency of three Elders. Church leadership inheres in Priesthood organisation.

"The Church itself is a product of Priesthood," wrote John A. Widtsoe. "Therefore, whenever the Church of Christ is upon earth the Priesthood is a part of it. The Church is the instrument through which Priesthood operates. Men may then obtain the Priesthood through the Church and in no other way."

It is evident that quorums were organised and called to function during the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time. Jesus called the Twelve Apostles as a quorum to lead the Church after He was gone. As given by John, He said "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you."

Luke also records: "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles."

DECEMBER 22

FROM THE DIARY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

DECEMBER 25, 1843

"This morning, about one o'clock, I was aroused by an English sister, Lettice Rushton, widow of Richard Rushton Senior, (who ten years ago, lost her sight), accompanied by three

Help yourself to greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven

BY DAVID G. THOMAS, HEAD OF THE P.B.O. IN FRANKFURT

Quorums of Seventy were also organised for missionary work which is the special calling of the Seventy. Of this Luke says: "After these things the Lord appointed another seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every City and place whither he himself would come . . . And the Seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy Name."

In the dispensations of the fullness of times there is a degree of Priesthood organisation not specified in the record of former times.

Section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants specifies the organisation of Priesthood quorums. In the Melchizedek Priesthood are the offices of Elder, Seventy and High Priest, with three special callings: Bishop, Patriarch, and Apostle.

The Elder is the first office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. The majority of the Melchizedek Priesthood in an Elders' Quorum is 96 Elders with officers of President, two counsellors and secretary chosen from the quorum membership.

A quorum may be organised in a stake, or ward, a mission, or, a subdivision of a mission when 49 Elders, that is, a majority of 96 are available. A quorum may be divided when 98 or more Elders are available.

In the organised stakes there is usually an Elders quorum in each ward. Sometimes there are two quorums, depending on the ward population and the number of Elders therein.

In the mission field there is often only one quorum mission-wide. For the convenience of servicing the members, branch groups are formed with a group leader and secretary as leaders of each branch group. When the number in a group warrants, the group leader may be given one or two assistants.

All quorum and group activities are under the jurisdiction of the quorum presidency assisted by the leaders of branch groups. Every effort should be made to keep the groups an integral part of the quorum. This should be done by the quorum presidency promoting a unified programme for the quorum as a whole and branch leaders striving to keep in step with all the quorum activities.

Effort should be made to encourage and assist quorum members to maintain their allegiance to the quorum. Each group should strive to keep abreast of the lesson programme. As a rule projects should be quorum-wide. Socials directed by quorum leaders will help in promoting personal contacts.

Group leaders are the personal representatives of the quorum presidency and share with them the responsibilities of promoting the quorum programme within each branch group. Quorum and group leaders should be on the most friendly terms in which the quorum officers are kept advised of the problems and progress within the branch groups.

of her sons, with their wives, and her two daughters, with their husbands, and several of their neighbours, singing, "Mortals, awake! with angels join," etc., which caused a thrill of pleasure to run through my soul.

"All of my family and boarders arose to hear the serenade, and I felt to thank my Heavenly Father for their visit, and blessed them in the name of the Lord.

"They also visited my brother, Hyrum, who was awakened from his sleep. He arose and went out of doors. He shook hands with and blessed each one of them in the name of the Lord, and said that he thought at first that a cohort of angels had come to visit him, it was such heavenly music to him."

THE ability to inspire Aaronic Priesthood members to remain or become active in the Church is not a bequest—it is a conquest. It must be earned by diligent and prayerful study, by the acquisition of an engaging, dynamic personality, by the exercise of great faith, by persistent orderly effort, and by hard work.

This inspirational leadership ability with its attendant blessings is within the reach of every group or quorum advisor who is willing to pay the price. It can't be had for free. "Something for nothing" is a fantasy of the imagination and bursts like a bubble when we face life's realities. In the Lord's work, as in all of life's complexities, the great law of compensation is operating. There are no short cuts to happiness. You can't really cheat and win, nor can you be cheated. You get only what you pay for in life.

You then, who are called to work with Aaronic Priesthood members, yours is the challenge to be such leaders and to win the approbation of our Father in Heaven through the application of your acquired leadership in the saving of souls.

Don't be satisfied with mediocrity. Be a real leader. Don't be complacent in your assigned task. Know your job and put your heart and soul into its fulfillment. The blessings of the accomplishment that follow diligence far outweigh the sacrifices and efforts of your preparation and planning, regardless of their magnitude. Help yourself to greatness in the Kingdom of our Father.

DECEMBER

23

TALK HAPPINESS FAITH AND HEALTH

Talk Happiness The world is sad enough
Without your woes. No path is wholly rough;
Look for the places that are smooth and clear,
And speak of those, to rest the weary ear
Of Earth, so hurt by one continuous strain
Of human discontent and grief and pain.

Talk faith. The world is better off without
Your uttered ignorance and morbid doubt.
If you have faith in God, or man, or self,
Say so. If not, push back upon the shelf
Of silence all your thoughts, till faith shall come;
No one will grieve because your lips are dumb.

Talk health. The dreary, never-changing tale
Of mortal maladies is worn and stale.
You cannot charm, or interest, or please
By harping on that minor chord, disease.
Say you are well, or all is well with you,
And God shall hear your words and make them true.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

We thank Thee O God for a Prophet

SAYS PRESIDENT N. ELDON TANNER
OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

ON DECEMBER 23, 1805, a babe was born who grew to be one of the greatest Prophets of all time. He, like the Saviour whose birth we celebrate at this time of the year, was born into a humble home.

As he sought, through prayer, in his early youth to learn which Church he should join, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ appeared in person to him, and as he left that grove that day he knew, contrary to his early teaching, that God and Jesus Christ are living beings, that they heard his prayer, spoke to him, directed him, and told him that he was chosen for a great and marvellous work. Though he was ridiculed and persecuted as he told of his experience, he continued to bear testimony that he had seen a vision and that God knew that he had seen it and he could not deny it. For the next three years he withstood all persecution and ridicule; and though he had no Priesthood meeting to attend, no Sunday School, no MIA, no Seminary nor Institute, he remained true to his conviction.

President N. Eldon Tanner

At the age of 17, the Angel Moroni, who said he was a messenger from God, appeared to him and told him that he had been chosen by God and that his name would be known for good and evil throughout the world. He quoted many scriptures and told him of a book of gold plates which contained an account of the former inhabitants of the American continent and the source from whence they came. He told him that he had been chosen to translate these records.

No place in all the scriptures is there a record of any of the Prophets receiving greater, more direct revelation and visitations from Heavenly beings than did this young man, Joseph Smith.

First, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ appeared to him; then the Angel Moroni; then John the Baptist, the Son of Zacharias the forerunner of Jesus Christ appeared and bestowed the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver Cowdery. This was followed by Peter, James and John, the senior three apostles of Jesus Christ, who appeared and bestowed upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood.

He tells of other visitations. We read in the 10th Section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* where Jesus Christ appeared to him again, and then Moses, Elias and Elijah, each bringing and bestowing the keys of the Priesthood which he held.

As this young man of 24 years of age, with a few of his neighbours, organised the Church, he made the bold statement that he had been called by God to be a Seer, a Translator, a Prophet, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, an Elder of the Church, through the will of God, the Father, and the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and that he had been chosen to be the President of the Church of Jesus Christ here upon the earth.

By revelation the Lord said to the Church :

" Thou shall give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as you receiveth, walking in all holiness before me; for his word ye shall receive as if from thine own mouth in all patience and faith."

He reported each of these visitations to his parents, to his friends, and to those with whom he was associated. Imagine, a young man standing and making these claims if they were not true. No claims of equal force and importance were ever made by any man except Jesus Christ Himself.

As the Church was organised in April of 1830, Joseph, under direct revelation, outlined the quorums of the Priesthood and duties of each. Today, over 130 years later, this same 20th Section of the *Doctrine and Covenants* is taken as authority as to the duties and responsibility of those holding the different Priesthoods.

Many other revelations were received by him and given to the world which have stood the test of time. Many of his prophecies have been fulfilled. The world has been greatly blessed by the birth of this son of God who is a Prophet, Seer and Revelator and through whom the Church of Jesus Christ was re-established here upon the earth and the Priesthood restored as well as the Gospel in its fullness as contained in the *Book of Mormon.*

May we all have the strength, the courage, the determination and ability to go forward in the service of our Heavenly Father realising that He stands ready to direct us and guide us ; and that as we live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we will be happy while we are working out our exaltation.

May we always feel to say,

" We thank Thee O God for a Prophet to guide us in these latter days . . . we feel it a pleasure to serve Thee and love to obey Thy commands."

As we do this, we will enjoy the true spirit of Christmas and be more nearly worthy of the sacrifice made by Him whose birth we celebrate.

SOMETHING TO DO

" Thank God every morning you get up that you have something to do *which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance, self-control, diligence, strength of will, content, and a hundred other virtues which the idle never know."*

Charles Kingsley

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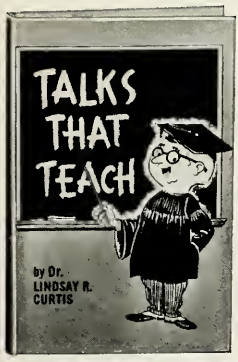

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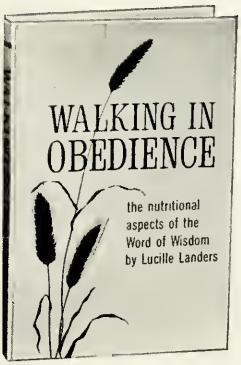

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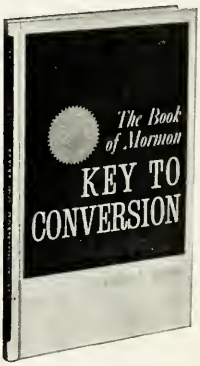

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DECEMBER

24

The Testimony of NEPHI

" . . . I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white.

"And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, What beholdest thou ?

" And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.

"And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God ?

"And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless I do not know the meaning of all things.

"And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

"And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of time the angel spake unto me saying: Look!

"And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms.

"And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! "

FROM 1 NEPHI 11: 13-20

DECEMBER

25

The Testimony of LUKE

FROM LUKE 1: 1-21

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

News from Stakes and Missions

LONDON STAKE

All-day Seminar for Stake Leaders

THE London Stake Presidency, all of the London Stake Bishoprics and their Ward Clerks, the High Councilmen and the Stake Elders' Quorum Presidency attended an all-day Seminar in the Hyde Park Chapel on Sunday, October 25.

The Seminar was presided over by Elder Theodore M. Burton, an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve and President of the European Mission. In attendance as instructors were three Mission Presidents—President A. Ray Curtis, of the South-West British Mission; President David B. Haight, of the Scottish Mission; and President Phil D. Jensen, of the North Scottish Mission—and Brother David G. Thomas, head of the new Presiding Bishopric's Office in Frankfurt.

The Seminar opened at 9 a.m. and consisted of a series of 45-minute discussions throughout the day—with a 20-minute break for lunch—to five in the afternoon.

The subjects discussed ranged through almost every facet of Stake and Ward procedure, including two absorbing sessions on finances and the re-activation of Senior Aaronic members, under the direction of Brother Thomas.

Each of the Mission Presidents in attendance have either been Stake Presidents or served on a Stake Presidency. Their experience was invaluable and the advice they gave will certainly serve to improve the work in the London Stake.

Services at each of the Wards and Branches throughout the Stake on that Sunday were conducted by senior members of the priesthood.

Elder John Bone and Sister Angela Webster outside the Gorleston Chapel after their wedding. This was the first wedding to he performed in this chapel, and the service was conducted by President E. S. Dobson of the Gorleston Branch. There were more than 150 guests at the service.

Elder Bone is a Junior Technician in the R.A.F., Sister Webster is an active memher of the Gorleston Branch. Her father is the YMMIA superintendent and her mother is the Branch Relief Society President. She has a hrother serving on a huilding mission.

SCOTTISH MISSION

Coastal Cruise for 1,300

MORE than thirteen hundred saints, their friends, and missionaries climbed aboard the S.S. *Caledonia* recently for a cruise down the Clyde River and round the off-shore islands along the Argylle Coast.

This was an oustanding fellowshipping event. The sun shone the entire day and the beauty of the Isles of Bute and the Argyle Coast, as the ship sailed through the world-famous Kyles of Bute, was a sight that many would not soon forget.

Entertainment was provided by saints and missionaries. The ship stopped for a short time at the popular holiday resort town of Rothesay, in the centre of which stands a castle built by the King of Norway over 900 years ago for the purpose of defending the off-shore islands from the Scots.

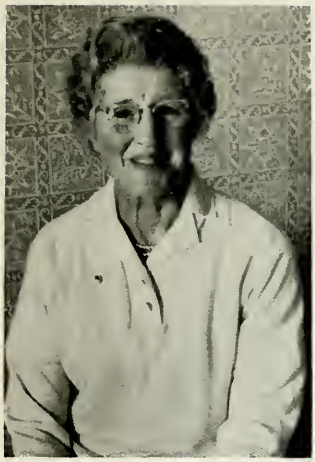
The Trial of the Stick of Joseph

DURING the past few months, three members of the Mission Home staff have put on the "Trial of the Stick of Joseph" before hundreds of interested saints and contacts. This dramatisation of the original incident by Jack West was made more realistic by stage settings and costumes.

Elder Stephen G. Morgan, the Mission Secretary, took the part of the Counsel for the Defence; Elder George Harmon, the Mission Publication Director, took the part of Counsel for the Prosecution; and President James H. Pingree, Counsellor in the Mission Presidency, acted as the Judge.

The dramatisation lasted two-and-a-half hours. It included charges, counter-charges, examination of witnesses, etc., all of which made it an enjoyable as well as an informative session.

After each performance people commented on the fact that their testimony had been strengthened by hearing the Counsel for the Defence put forth the evidence of the truthfulness of the *Book of Mormon*. And many contacts, who witnessed the trial, also gained further interest in the Church.



At the Hull District Conference held in the York Chapel, the morning session was highlighted by a tribute paid to one of the choice members of the West Hull Branch.

Sister Vera Thistleton above was presented with an Honorary Golden Gleaner Award. President Gerald Aubery of the Hull District Presidency made the presentation and told of the great service this sweet sister had given to her Church and the young people within. Sister Thistleton has been a member of the Church for 37 years. During that time she has served in many capacities. However, the longest service she has rendered has been in the M.I.A., which has kept her active for over 30 years.

S.W. BRITISH MISSION

New Counsellors for President Curtis

CHANGES in the Presidency of the South-West British Mission result from the departure home of Brother and Sister Stephen H. Winter and Elder David P. Howells.

Brother Winter served as the First Counsellor to President A. Ray Curtis, the Mission President, with Elder Howells as Second Counsellor.

Called to replace Brother Winter is President Leonard Brimley, who was serving as Branch President of Bristol No. 1 Branch. Sister Brimley joins Sister Curtis as First Counsellor in the Mission Relief Society Presidency.

The new Second Counsellor is Elder Kent R. Gamette.

Round and About

Friday evenings on the Sedgley Branch building site have become a regular evening for a barbecue, at which cakes, hot-dogs, hamburgers and drinks are sold to raise money for the new chapel. At some of these Friday evening meetings more than 100 people attend.

* * *

Dudley Branch Relief Society raised £7 for the Leicester Stake building fund at two jumble sales.

Brighton Branch MIA opened their new season with a talent show, the highlight of which was a guitar and song item by Sister Dodd and Elder Jensen. The evening was also devoted to a farewell party to Brother and Sister Marshall, who were moving from Brighton to the Crawley Ward in the London Stake.

* * *

Three weddings within ten days were held in the Sunderland Stake. In the Newcastle Ward, Sister Jacqueline Jean Nation was married to Brother Jack Hide. The new Hartlepool Chapel was the venue for the wedding of Sister Auriel Merle Robinson and Brother James Fenwick, who recently returned from a building mission in Liverpool. Both are members of the Sunderland Ward. Also married at Hartlepool were Sister Wendy Valerie Cowan and Brother William Norman Hall, members of the Billingham Ward.

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STOP PRESS

Elder Benson appointed European President

THE appointment of Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve, as president of the European Mission has been announced by the First Presidency.

Elder Benson will succeed President Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, with headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.

Elder Benson will preside over the following 12 missions of the Church in Europe: Austrian, Bavarian, Berlin, Central German, Danish, Finnish, North German, Norwegian, South German, Swedish, Swiss and West German missions.

Elder Benson will be accompanied to Europe by his wife, Mrs. Flora Amussen Benson and their daughter, Beth, a sophomore at the University of Utah. They expect to leave Salt Lake City this month.

This will be Elder Benson's second appointment to the missions of Europe. He spent the year 1946, immediately following World War II, in Europe directing the re-establishment of the missions. He also supervised the distribution of food, clothing and other needed supplies through the Welfare Programme of the Church. His headquarters during that time were in London.

Elder Benson is also a former missionary to England from 1921 to 1923. He also made several trips to Europe and other countries of the world including Russian during the eight years, 1953-61, that he served as Secretary of Agriculture in the cabinet of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Elder Benson has been a member of the Council of the Twelve since June, 1943. In this position he has travelled widely throughout the stakes and missions of the Church.

Elder and Sister Benson, with their daughter, Beth, who will accompany them on their tour of duty in the European Mission.

Prior to his call to the Apostleship he served as president of two stakes, Boise Stake and Washington Stake.

The new European Mission president is well known internationally in the fields of agriculture and farm and market economics. Among other positions he has served as executive secretary of the Nation Council of Farmer Co-operatives, with headquarters in Washington D.C. He also assisted in organising the Idaho Co-operative Council and served as its secretary, from 1933 to 1938.

Elder Benson is a native of Whitney, Idaho, where he was born, August 4, 1899, a son of George T. and Sarah Dunkley Benson. He was married September 10, 1926, and the Bensons are the parents of six children; Reed A., Mark A. and Beth of Salt Lake City, Mrs. Barbara Walker, Calgary, Canada, Mrs. Beverly Parker, and Mrs. Bonnie Madsen, both of Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Benson has given long service to the Church, and is working in the Relief Society of the Parley's Ward. She has served on a YWMIA board, been in a stake Relief Society presidency and has taught in Primary and Sunday School. She filled a mission to Hawaii before her marriage.

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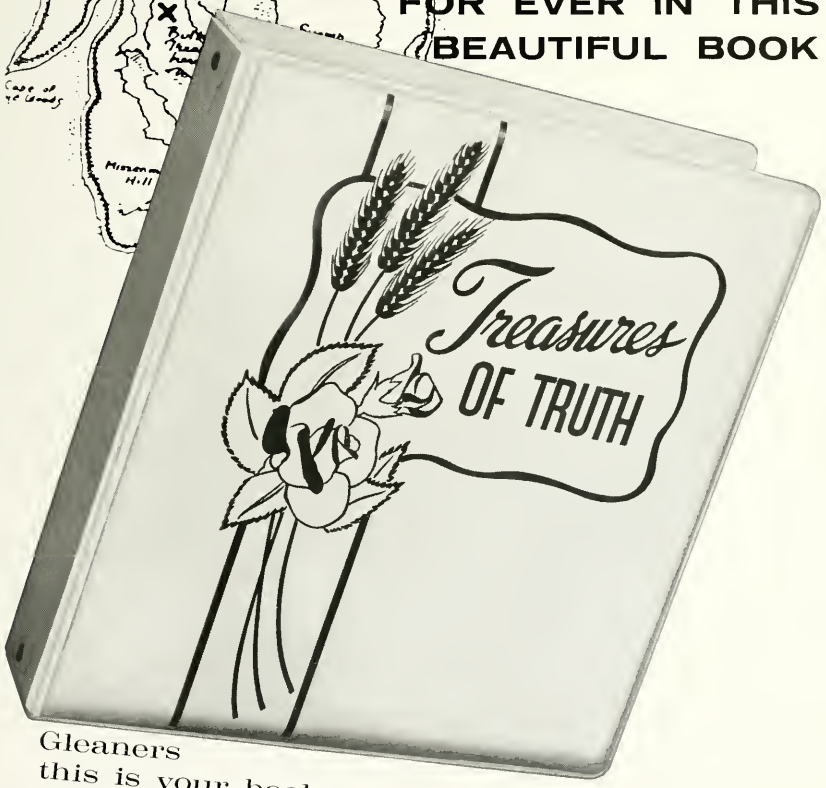

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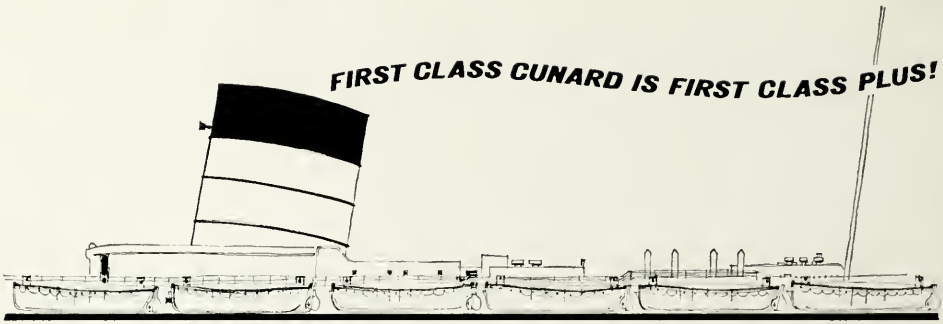

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